CHARACTER

AND

CHARACTERISTIC MEN.

BY

EDWIN P. WHIPPLE.

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TO

THE MEMORY

OF

THOMAS STARR KING,

This Volume

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

The essays in the present volume were written at various times, and without any view to their connected publication; but they all more or less illustrate one idea of the nature, growth, and influence of character. With the exception of those on Thackeray, Hawthorne, and Agassiz, they were all originally delivered as lectures or addresses, and the style doubtless exhibits that perpetual scepticism as to the patience of audiences which torments the lecturer during the brief hour in which he attempts to hold their attention. The first six of the essays, with the exception of that on Intellectual Character, were published in Harper's Magazine, between July and November, 1857, and the paper on Agassiz was also contributed to that periodical. As most of the essays were written before the Rebellion,

some of the opinions expressed in them look antiquated as seen in the light of recent events. This is particularly true of the discourse on the American Mind, which is only now reprinted because it contains some remarks on national character that could not well be omitted.

Boston, July, 1866.

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I.

CHARACTER.

IT is impossible to cast the most superficial glance over the community, without being impressed by the predominance of associated over individual action, and of people over persons. Few dare to announce unwelcome truth, or even to defend enthusiastic error, without being backed by some sect, party, association, or clique; and, thus sustained, the effort is in danger of subsiding from a duty into a pleasure or passion. It might be supposed that this companionable thinking,—this moral or religious power owned in joint stock,—would at least operate against egotism and the vices of capricious individualism; but, practically, it is apt to result in self-admiration through mutual admiration; to pamper personal pride without always developing a personality to be proud of; and to raise the market price of mediocrity by making genius and heroism small and cheap. Formerly, to attack a community intrenched in laws, customs, institutions, and beliefs, required dauntless courage; a soul sublimed by an idea

above the region of vanity and conceit; a character resolutely facing responsibilities it clearly realized; and especially a penetrating vision into the spirit and heart of the objects assailed. This last characteristic is insisted upon by all the authorities. "There is nothing so terrible as activity without insight," says Goethe. "I would open every one of Argus's hundred eyes before I used one of Briareus's hundred hands," says Lord Bacon. "Look before you leap," says John Smith, all over the world. But it is too much the mistake of many hopeful people of our day to consider organized institutions, which had their origin in the vices or necessities of human nature, to possess no authority over the understanding if they happen to contradict certain abstract truisms, and a still greater mistake to suppose that these institutions will yield to a proclamation of opinions or a bombardment of words.

It being then evident that institutions can be successfully attacked only by forces kindred in nature to those by which they were originally organized, the question arises, What is it that really forms and reforms institutions, communicates life and movement to society, and embodies thoughts in substantial facts? The answer is, in one word, Character; and this conducts us at once beneath the sphere of associated and merely mechanical contrivances into the region of personal and

vital forces. It is character which gives authority to opinions, puts virile meaning into words, and burns its way through impediments insurmountable to the large in brain who are weak in heart; for character indicates the degree in which a man possesses creative spiritual energy; is the exact measure of his real ability; is, in short, the expression, and the only expression, of the man, — the person. His understanding and sensibility may play with thoughts and coquet with sentiments, and his conscience flirt with beautiful ideals of goodness, and this amateur trifling he may call by some fine name or other; but it is the centre and heart of his being, the source whence spring living ideas and living deeds, which ever determines his place when we estimate him as a power. The great danger of the conservative is his temptation to surrender character and trust in habits; the great danger of the radical is his temptation to discard habits without forming character. One is liable to mental apathy, the other to mental anarchy; and apathy and anarchy are equally destitute of causative force and essential individuality.

As character is thus the expression of no particular quality or faculty, but of a whole nature, it reveals, of course, a man's imperfections in revealing his greatness. He is nothing unless he acts; and, as in every vital thought and deed character appears, his acts must par-

take of his infirmities, and the mental and moral life communicated in them be more or less diseased. As he never acts from opinions or propositions, his nature cannot be hidden behind such thin disguises, the fatal evidence against him being in the deed itself. If there be sensuality, or malignity, or misanthropy in him, it will come out in his actions, though his tongue drop purity and philanthropy in every word. Probably more hatred, licentiousness, and essential impiety are thus communicated through the phraseology and contortions of their opposites, than in those of vice itself. Moral life is no creation of moral phrases. The words that are truly vital powers for good or evil are only those which, as Pindar says, "the tongue draws up from the deep heart."

Now, as men necessarily communicate themselves when they produce from their vital activity, it follows that their productions will never square with the abstract opinions of the understanding, but present a concrete, organic whole, compounded of truth and error, evil and good, exactly answering to the natures whence they proceed. This actual process of creation we are prone to ignore or overlook, and to criticise institutions as Rymer and Dennis criticised poems, that is, as though they were the manufactures of mental and moral machines, working on abstract principles; where-

as creation on such a method is impossible, and we are compelled to choose between imperfect organisms and nothing. That this imperfection is not confined to jurists and legislators is sufficiently manifest when the vehement and opinionated social critic undertakes the work of demolition and reconstruction, and all the vices peculiar to his own nature, such as his intolerance of facts and disregard of the rights and feelings of others, have an opportunity of displaying themselves. His talk is fine, and his theories do him honor; but when he comes to act as a man, when he comes to exhibit what he is as well as what he thinks, it is too commonly found that four months of the rule of so-called philosophers and philanthropists are enough to make common men sigh for their old Bourbons and Bonapartes. Robespierre, anarchist and philanthropist, Frederick of Prussia, despot and philosopher, were both bitter and vitriolic natures, yet both, in their youth, exceeded Exeter Hall itself in their professions of universal beneficence, and evinced, in their rants, not hypocrisy, but self-delusion. Frederick indeed wrote early in life a treatise called "The Anti-Machiavel, which was," says his biographer, "an edifying homily against rapacity, perfidy, arbitrary government, unjust war; in short, against almost everything for which its author is now remembered among men."

Thus to the pride of reason and vanity of opinion character interposes its iron limitations, declaring war against all forms and modes of pretension, and affording the right measure of the wisdom and folly, the righteousness and the wickedness, substantially existing in persons and in communities of persons. Let us now consider this power in some of the varieties of its manifestation, observing the law of its growth and influence and the conditions of its success. Our purpose will rather be to indicate its radical nature than to treat of those superficial peculiarities which many deem to be its essential elements.

The question has been often raised, whether character be the creation of circumstances, or circumstances the creation of character. Now, to assert that circumstances create character is to eliminate from character that vital causative energy which is its essential characteristic; and to assert that circumstances are the creation of character, is to endow character with the power not only to create, but to furnish the materials of creation. The result of both processes would not be character, but caricature. - The truth seems to be, that circumstances are the nutriment of character, the food which it converts into blood; and this process of assimilation presupposes individual power to act upon circumstances. Goethe says, in reference to his own

mental growth and productiveness, "Every one of my writings has been furnished to me by a thousand different persons, a thousand different things. The learned and the ignorant, the wise and the foolish, infancy and age, have come in turn — generally without the least suspicion of it — to bring me the offering of their thoughts, their faculties, their experience. Often they have sowed the harvest I have reaped. My work is that of an aggregate of beings taken from the whole of nature; it bears the name of Goethe." Yes, it bears the name of Goethe, because Goethe assimilated all this knowledge and all this aggregate of beings into Goethe, — broadening, enriching, and deepening his individuality, but not annihilating it; so that his character became as comprehensive as his experience.

Indeed, in all the departments of life, meditative and practical, success thus depends on a thorough knowledge, proceeding from a complete assimilation, of all the circumstances connected with each department, — the man standing for the thing, having mastered and, as it were, consumed it, so that all its forces are in himself as personal power and personal intelligence. The true merchant, the true statesman, the true military commander, the true artist, becomes a man of character only when he "puts on," and identifies himself with, his particular profession or art. Balzac

thought he could not describe a landscape until he had turned himself for the moment into trees, and grass, and fountains, and stars, and effects of sunlight, and thus entered into the heart and life of the objects he ached to reproduce. Nelson realized with such intensity the inmost secrets of his profession, that experience and study had in him been converted into intuition, so that he could meet unexpected contingencies with instinctive expedients. If he failed, through lack of means, to snatch all the possible results of victory, his unrealized conception tortured him more than a sabre cut or a shattered limb. At the Battle of the Nile many French ships escaped because he had no frigates to pursue them. In his despatches he writes: "Should I die this moment, 'want of frigates' would be found written on my heart!"

With this view of character as the embodiment of things in persons, it is obviously limited in its sphere to the facts and laws it has made its own, and out of that sphere is comparatively feeble. Thus, many able lawyers and generals have been blunderers as statesmen; and one always shudders for the health of the community when the name of a statesman or clergyman — properly authoritative in his special department — is employed to recommend some universal panacea, or some aqueous establishment for washing away the

diseases of the world. Character speaks with authority only of those matters it has realized, and in respect to them its dogmatisms are reasons and its opinions are judgments. When Mr. Webster, in attacking a legal proposition of an opponent at the bar, was reminded that he was assailing a dictum of Lord Camden, he turned to the Court, and after paying a tribute to Camden's greatness as a jurist, simply added, "But, may it please your Honor, *I* differ from Lord Camden." It is evident that such self-assertion would have been ridiculous had not the character of the man relieved it from all essential pretension; but if the case had been one of surgery or theology, and Mr. Webster had emphasized his "*ego*" in a difference with Sir Astley Cooper or Hooker, the intrusion of his "I" would have been an impertinence which his reputation as a statesman or lawyer could not have shielded from contempt. Indeed, injustice is often done to the real merits of eminent men when they get enticed out of their strongholds of character, and venture into unaccustomed fields of exertion, where their incapacity is soon detected. Macaulay has vividly shown how Hastings, the most vigorous and skilful of English statesmen in India, blundered the moment he applied the experience he had acquired in Bengal to English politics; and that perfection in one profession does not imply even com-

mon judgment outside of it, was painfully demonstrated a few years ago, in the case of an accomplished American general, among whose splendid talents writing English does not appear to be one. When, therefore, not content to leave his prodigies of strategy and tactics to speak for themselves, he invaded the domain of rhetoric, and crossed pens with Secretary Marcy, people began to imagine, as verbs went shrieking about after nouns, and relative pronouns could find no relations, that the great general had no character at all.

But confine a characteristic man to the matters he has really mastered, and there is in him no blundering, no indecision, no uncertainty, but a straightforward, decisive activity, sure as insight and rapid as instinct. You cannot impose upon him by nonsense of any kind, however prettily you may bedizen it in inapplicable eloquence. Thus Jeremiah Mason — a man who was not so much a lawyer as he was law embodied — was once engaged to defend a clergyman accused of a capital crime, and was repeatedly bothered by the attempts of the brethren to make him substitute theological for legal evidence. As he was making out his brief, one of these sympathizers with the prisoner rushed joyously into the room, with the remark that Brother A—— was certainly innocent, for an angel from heaven had appeared to him the night before, and

had given him direct assurance of the fact. "That is very important evidence, indeed," was the gruff reply of Mason; "but can you subpœna that angel?" The anecdote we mention because it is representative; for the philosophy which prompted such a demand annually saves thousands of merchants, manufacturers, and farmers from rushing into ruinous speculations, and preserves society itself from dissolving into a mere anarchy of fanaticisms. The resistance doubtless comes, in many cases, from stupidity; but then stupidity is a great conservative power, especially in those periods of moral flippancy and benevolent *persiflage* when it rains invitations to square the circle, to undertake voyages to the moon, and to peril the existence of solid realities on the hope of establishing a millennium on their ruins.

As the perfection of character depends on a man's embodying the facts and laws of his profession to such a degree of intensity that power and intelligence are combined in his activity, it is evident that mere unassimilated knowledge — knowledge that does not form part of the mind, but is attached to it — will often blunder as badly as ignorance itself. Thus Marshal Berthier enjoyed for some time the reputation of planning Napoleon's battles, and of being a better general than his master, — an impression which his own conceit

doubtless readily indorsed; but the illusion was dispelled in the campaign of 1809, when Napoleon sent him on in advance to assume the command. It took him but a marvellously short time to bring the army to the brink of destruction, and his incompetency was so glaring that some of the marshals mistook it for treachery. Instead of concentrating the forces, he dispersed them over a field of operations forty leagues in extent, and exposed them to the danger of being destroyed in detail, thinking all the while that he was exhibiting singular depth of military genius; when, in fact, it was only the opportune arrival of Napoleon, and his fierce, swift orders for immediate concentration, that saved the army from disgraceful dispersion and defeat, — an army which, under Napoleon, soon occupied Vienna, and eventually brought the campaign to a victorious conclusion at Wagram.

It is, however, the misfortune of nations that such men as Berthier are not always tested by events, and the limitations of their capacity plainly revealed. Besides, it must be admitted that, in practical politics, circumstances sometimes lift into power small-minded natures, who are exactly level to the prejudices of their time, and thus make themselves indispensable to it. Mr. Addington, by the grace of intolerance made for a short period Prime Minister of England, — a man of

great force of self-consequence, and great variety of demerit, — was one of these fortunate echoes of character; and as his littleness answered admirably to all that was little in the nation, he was, during his whole life, an important element of party power. Canning used despairingly to say of him, that "he was like the small-pox, — every administration had to take him *once*." No party ever succeeded that did not thus represent the public nonsense as well as the public sense; and happy is that body of politicians where one of the members relieves his associates of all fear for their safety, not by his vigor or sagacity in administration, but by his being one in whom the public nonsense knows it can confide. Indeed, Sydney Smith declares that every statesman who is troubled by a rush of ideas to the head should have his foolometer ever by his side, to warn him against offending or outstriding public opinion. This foolometer is as necessary to despotic as to liberal governments; for one great secret of the art of politics all over the world is, never to push evil or beneficent measures to that point where resistance commences on the part of the governed.

Character, in its intrinsic nature, being thus the embodiment of things in persons, the quality which most distinguishes men of character from men of passions and opinions is Persistency, tenacity of hold upon

their work, and power to continue in it. This quality is the measure of the force inherent in character, and is the secret of the confidence men place in it, — soldiers in generals, parties in leaders, people in statesmen. Indeed, if we sharply scrutinize the lives of persons eminent in any department of action or meditation, we shall find that it is not so much brilliancy and fertility as constancy and continuousness of effort which make a man great. This is as true of Kepler and Newton as of Hannibal and Cæsar; of Shakespeare and Scott as of Howard and Clarkson. The heads of such men are not merely filled with ideas, purposes, and plans, but the primary characteristic of their natures and inmost secret of their success is this: that labor cannot weary, nor obstacles discourage, nor drudgery disgust them. The universal line of distinction between the strong and the weak is, that one persists; the other hesitates, falters, trifles, and at last collapses or "caves in."

This principle obtains in every department of affairs and every province of thought. Even in social life, it is persistency which attracts confidence more than talents and accomplishments. Lord Macaulay was the most brilliant, rapid, and victorious of talkers, — inexhaustible in words and in matter, — so endless, indeed, that on those rare occasions when he allowed others to

put in an occasional word, he was hit by Sydney Smith's immortal epigram, complimenting his "flashes of silence"; but in character, and in the influence that radiates from character, he was probably inferior to his taciturn father, Zachary Macaulay, who, with an iron grasp of an unpopular cause, and a soul which was felt as inspiration in whatever company he appeared, had still hardly a word to spare. The son conversed, but the mere presence of the father was conversation. The son excited admiration by what he said, the father wielded power and enforced respect and became the object to which the conversation of the circle referred, in virtue of what he was, and of what everybody knew he would persist in being.

In politics, again, no mere largeness of comprehension or loftiness of principle will compensate for a lack of persistency to bear, with a mind ever fresh and a purpose ever fixed, all the toil, dulness, fret, and disappointment of the business; and this is perhaps the reason that, in politics, the perseverance of the sinners makes us blush so often for the pusillanimity of the saints. So, in war, mere courage and military talent are not always sufficient to make a great military commander. Thus Peterborough is, in comparison with Marlborough, hardly known as a general; yet Peterborough, by his skilful and splendid audacity,

gained victories which Marlborough might have been proud to claim. The difficulty with Peterborough was, that he could not endure being bored; while Marlborough's endurance of bores was quite as marvellous as the military genius by which he won every battle he fought and took every place he besieged. If Peterborough was prevented by the caution of his government or his allies from seizing an occasion for a great exploit, he resigned his command in a pet; but Marlborough patiently submitted to be robbed by the timidity of his allies of opportunities for victories greater even than those he achieved, and persisted, in spite of irritations which would have crazed a more sensitive spirit, until the object of the heterogeneous coalition which his genius welded together had been attained.

Again, in the conduct of social and moral reforms, persistency is the test by which we discriminate men of moral opinions from men in whom moral opinions have been deepened into moral ideas and consolidated in moral character. To be sure, a man may, without character, seem to persist in the work of reform, provided society will fly into a passion with him, and thus furnish continual stimulants to his pride and pugnacity; but true persistency becomes indispensable when his ungracious task is to overcome that smiling

indifference, that self-pleased ignorance, that half-pitying, irritating contempt with which a fat and contented community commonly receives the arguments and the invectives of innovation. It is the more important to insist on sinewy vigor and constancy in the champions of reform, because, in our day, the business attracts to it so many amateurs who mistake vague intellectual assent to possible improvements for the disposition and genius which make a reformer; who substitute bustle for action, sauciness for audacity, the itch of disputation for the martyr-spirit; and who arrive readily at prodigious results through a bland ignoring of all the gigantic obstacles in the path. Thus it would not be difficult, on any pleasant morning, to meet at any city restaurant some ingenious gentleman getting what he is pleased to call a living after the old Adamic method of competition, who will, over a cup of coffee, dispose of concrete America in about ten minutes; slavery disappears after the first sip; the Constitution goes in two or three draughts; the Bible vanishes in a pause of deglutitional satisfaction; and a new order of society springs up while, in obedience to the old, he draws forth a reluctant shilling to pay for the beverage. Now, there is no disgrace in lacking insight into practical life, and power to change it for the better; but certainly these amia-

ble deficiencies are as gracefully exhibited in assenting to what is established as in playing at reform, attitudinizing martyrdom, and engaging in a scheme to overturn the whole world as a mere relaxation from the severer duties of life.

In passing from practical life to literature, we shall find that persistency is the quality separating first-rate genius from all the other rates, — proving, as it does, that the author mentally and morally lives in the region of thought and emotion about which he writes; accepts the drudgery of composition as a path to the object he desires to master; and is too much enraptured with the beautiful vision before his eyes to weary of labor in its realization. In the creations of such men there is neither languor nor strain, but a "familiar grasp of things Divine." They are easily to be distinguished from less bountifully endowed natures and less raised imaginations. Thus Tennyson, as a man, is evidently not on a level with his works. He is rather a writer of poems than, like Wordsworth, essentially a poet; and, accordingly, he only occasionally rises into that region where Wordsworth permanently dwells; the moment he ceases his intense scrutiny of his arrested mood, and aims to be easy and familiar, he but unbends into laborious flatness; but we think a trained eye can detect, even in the

seeming commonplaces of Wordsworth, a ray of that light, "that never was on sea or land." Still, Tennyson, in his exalted moods, has a clear vision of a poetical conception, persists in his advances to it, discards all vagrant thoughts, and subordinates all minor ones, to give it organic expression; and, when he descends from his elevation, always brings a poem with him, and not a mere collection of poetical lines and images. Such a man, though his poetical character is — relatively to the greatest poets — imperfect, is still, of course, to be placed far above a mere mental *roué*, like the author of "Festus," who debauches in thoughts and sentiments; pours forth memories and fancies with equal arrogance of originality; and having no definite aim, except to be very fine and very saucy, produces little more than a collection of poetic materials, not fused, but confused. From such an anarchy of the faculties no great poem was ever born, for great poems are the creations of great individualities, — of that causative and presiding "Me" which contemptuously rejects the perilous impertinences it spontaneously engenders, and drives the nature of which it is the centre persistingly on to the object that gleams in the distance. Make a man of Milton's force and affluence of imagination half-intoxicated and half-crazy, and any enterprising booksel-

ler might draw from the lees of his mind a "Festus" once a week, and each monstrosity would doubtless be hailed by some readers, who think they have a taste for poetry, as a greater miracle of genius than "Paradise Lost."

Indeed, in all the departments of creative thought, fertility is a temptation to be resisted before inventions and discoveries are possible. The artist who dallies with his separate conceptions as they throng into his mind, produces no statue or picture, for that depends on austerely dismissing the most enticing images, provided they do not serve his particular purpose at the time. The same truth holds in the inventive arts and in science.

It is needless to say that the most common and most attractive manifestations of persistency of character proceed from those natures in which the affections are dominant. An amazing example, replete with that pathos which "lies too deep for tears," is found in the story, chronicled by John of Brompton, of the mother of Thomas-à-Becket. His father, Gilbert-à-Becket, was taken prisoner during one of the Crusades by a Syrian Emir, and held for a considerable period in a kind of honorable captivity. A daughter of the Emir saw him at her father's table, heard him converse, fell in love with him, and offered

to arrange the means by which both might escape to Europe. The project only partly succeeded; he escaped, but she was left behind. Soon afterward, however, she contrived to elude her attendants, and, after many marvellous adventures by sea and land, arrived in England, knowing but two English words, "London" and "Gilbert." By constantly repeating the first, she was directed to the city; and there, followed by a mob, she walked for months from street to street, crying, as she went, "Gilbert! Gilbert!" She at last came to the street in which her lover lived. The mob and the name attracted the attention of a servant in the house; Gilbert recognized her; and they were married. We doubt if any poet, if even Chaucer, ever imaginatively conceived sentiment in a form so vital and primary as it is realized in this fact. .

Character, whether it be small or great, evil or good, thus always represents a positive and persisting force, and can, therefore, like other forces, be *calculated*, and the issues of its action predicted. There is nothing really capricious in character to a man gifted with the true piercing insight into it; and Pope was right in bringing the charge of insanity against Curll, the bookseller, provided Curll did *once* speak politely to a customer, and did *once* refuse two-and-sixpence

for Sir Richard Blackmore's Essays. There is nothing more mortifying to a reader of mankind than to be convicted of error in spelling out a character. We can all sympathize with the story of that person who was once requested, by a comparative stranger, to lend him ten dollars, to be returned the next day at ten o'clock. The request was complied with; but the lender felt perfectly certain that the borrower belonged to that large and constantly-increasing class of our fellow-citizens who are commonly included in the genus "sponge," and he therefore bade his money, as it left his purse, that affectionate farewell which is only breathed in the moment of permanent separations. Much to his chagrin, however, the money was returned within a minute of the appointed time. A few days after, the same person requested a loan of thirty dollars, promising, as before, to return the sum at a specified hour. "No!" was the response of insulted and indignant sagacity; "you disappointed me once, sir, and I shall not give you an opportunity of doing it again."

A commanding mind in any station is indicated by the accuracy with which it calculates the power and working intelligence of the subaltern natures it uses. In business, in war, in government, in all matters where many agents are employed to produce

a single result, one miscalculation of character by the person who directs the complex operation is sufficient to throw the whole scheme into confusion. Napoleon's rage at General Dupont for capitulating at Baylen was caused not more by the disasters which flowed from it than by the irritation he felt in having confided to Dupont a task he proved incompetent to perform. Napoleon did not often thus miscalculate the capacity of his instruments. In the most desperate exigency of the battle of Wagram he had a cheerful faith that he should in the end be victorious, relying, as he did, on two things, — probabilities to others, but certainties to him, — namely, that the column led by Macdonald would pierce the Austrian centre, and that the difficult operation committed to Davoust would be carried out, whatever failure might have been possible had it been intrusted to any other marshal. So, after the defeat at Essling, the success of Napoleon's attempt to withdraw his beaten army depended on the character of Massena, to whom the Emperor despatched a messenger, telling him to keep his position for two hours longer at Aspern. This order, couched in the form of a request, almost required an impossibility; but Napoleon knew the indomitable tenacity of the man to whom he gave it. The messenger found Massena seated on a heap of

rubbish, his eyes bloodshot, his frame weakened by his unparalleled exertions during a contest of forty hours, and his whole appearance indicating a physical state better fitting the hospital than the field. But that steadfast soul seemed altogether unaffected by bodily prostration. Half dead as he was with physical fatigue, he rose painfully, and said: "Tell the Emperor that I will hold out for two hours — six — twenty-four — as long as it is necessary for the safety of the army." And, it is needless to add, he kept his word.

In politics, where so many foul purposes are veiled in fair pretences, the calculation of character is of primal importance; but the process requires insight and foresight beyond what people commonly exercise in practical affairs, and the result is that misconception of men and events which has so often involved individuals and governments in frightful calamities. A true judgment of persons penetrates through the surface to the centre and substance of their natures, and can even detect in pretences, which may deceive the pretenders themselves, that subtle guile which corrupt character always infuses into the most celestial professions of morality or humanity. In every French revolution, for example, it rains beneficent words; but, if we really desire to know how the bland and amiable humanities of the movement are to terminate, we must give slight

attention to what the social and political leaders say and think, except so far as in their sayings and thoughts there are occasionally those unconscious escapes of character which shed unwilling light on what they really are and what they really mean. We must not hesitate to deny undoubted truths if they are pompously announced for the purpose of serving the ends of falsehood. There is an acrid gentleman of my acquaintance, who, whenever he sees a quack advertisement commencing with the startling interrogation, "Is health desirable?" instantly answers, "No!" because, if the premise be once admitted, the pills follow in logical sequence; and, to save health in the concrete, he is willing to deny it in the abstract. So it is well to reject even liberty, equality, and fraternity, when, from the nature of their champions, or from the nature of the society to which they are applied, equality means the dominion of a clique, fraternity introduces massacre, and liberty ushers in Louis Napoleon and the Empire. It was by looking through the rodomontade of such virtue prattlers, and looking at men and things in their essential principles, that Burke was enabled to predict the issue of the French Revolution of 1789, and to give French news in advance, not merely of the mail, but of the actual occurrence of events. He read events in their principles and causes.

This calculation of character, this power of discerning the tendencies and results of actions in the nature of their actors, is not confined to practical life, but is applicable also to literature, — another great field in which character is revealed, and to which some allusion has already been made in treating of persistency. As all the vital movements of the mind are acts, character may be as completely expressed in the production of a book as in the conduct of a battle or the establishment of an institution. This is not merely the case in authors like Montaigne, Charles Lamb, and Sydney Smith, whose quaint exposure of individual peculiarities constitutes no small portion of their charm; or in authors like Rousseau and Byron, who exultingly exact attention to their fooleries and obliquities by furiously dragging their readers into the privacies of their moral being; or in authors like Lamartine, who seem to dwell in an innocent ignorance or dainty denial of all external objects which offend their personal tastes, and who dissolve their natures into a sentimental mist, which is diffused over every province of nature and human life which they appear to describe or portray. But the same principle, in these so glaringly apparent, holds with regard to writers whose natures are not obtruded upon the attention, but which escape in the general tone and animating spirit of their

productions. Guizot and Milman have both subjected the original authorities, consulted by Gibbon in his history of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, to the intensest scrutiny, to see if the historian has perverted, falsified, or suppressed facts. Their judgment is in favor of his honesty and his conscientious research. Yet this by no means proves that we can obtain through his history the real truth of persons and events. The whole immense tract of history he traverses he has thoroughly *Gibbonized*. The qualities of his character steal out in every paragraph; the words are instinct with Gibbon's nature; though the facts may be obtained from without, the relations in which they are disposed are communicated from within; and the human race for fifteen centuries is made tributary to Gibbon's thought, wears the colors and badges of Gibbon's nature, is denied the possession of any pure and exalted experiences which Gibbon cannot verify by his own; and the reader, who is magnetized by the historian's genius, rises from the perusal of the vast work, informed of nothing as it was in itself, but everything as it appeared to Gibbon, and especially doubting two things, — that there is any chastity in women, or any divine truth in Christianity. Yet we suppose that Gibbon would not, by critics, be ranked in the subjective class of writers, but in the objective class. Still,

the sensuality and scepticism which are in him are infused into the minds of his docile readers with more refined force than Rousseau and Byron ever succeeded in infusing theirs.

Every author, indeed, who really influences the mind, who plants in it thoughts and sentiments which take root and grow, communicates his character. Error and immorality, — two words for one thing, for error is the immorality of the intellect, and immorality the error of the heart, — these escape *from* him if they are *in* him, and pass into the recipient mind through subtle avenues invisible to consciousness. We accordingly sometimes find open natures, gifted with more receptivity than power of resistance or self-assertion, spotted all over with the sins of the intellects they have hospitably entertained, exhibiting evidence of having stormed heaven with Æschylus, and anatomized damnation with Dante, and revelled in indecencies with Rabelais, and got drunk with Burns, and violated all the austerer moralities with Moore.

Influence being thus the communication from one mind to another of positive individual life, great natures are apt to overcome smaller natures, instead of developing them, — a conquest and usurpation as common in literature as in practical affairs. This spiritual despotism, wielded by the Cæsars and Napoleons of

thought, ever implies personal and concentrated might in the despot; and the process of its operation is very different from those mental processes in which some particular faculty or sentiment acts, as it were, on its own account, — processes which lack all living force and influence, creating nothing, communicating nothing, equally good for nothing and bad for nothing. Thus, by wading through what Robert Hall calls the "continent of mud" of a mechanical religious writer, it is impossible to obtain any religious life; and diabolical vitality will perhaps be as vainly sought in the volumes of such a mechanical reprobate as Wycherley. But the moment you place yourself in relation with living minds, you find Shakespeare pouring Norman blood into your veins and the feudal system into your thoughts, and Milton putting iron into your will, and Spinoza entangling your poor wit in inextricable meshes of argumentation, and Goethe suffusing your whole nature with a sensuous delight, which converts heroism itself into a phase of the comfortable, and disinterestedness into one of the fine arts. The natures of such men, being deeper, healthier, and more broadly inclusive than the natures of intense and morbid authors, are necessarily stronger, more searching, and admit of less resistance. In order that they may be genially assimilated, we must keep them at such a distance as to save

our own personality from being insensibly merged into theirs. They are dangerous guests if they eat you, but celestial visitants if you can contrive to eat even a portion of them. It is curious to see what queer pranks they sometimes play with aspiring mediocrities, unqualified to receive more than the forms of anything, who strut about in their liveries, ostentatious of such badges of intellectual servitude, and emulous to act in the farce of high life as it is below stairs. Thus, when Goethe first invaded the United States, it was noised about that he was a many-sided man, free from every sort of misdirecting enthusiasm, and conceiving and presenting all things in their right relations. Instantly a swarm of Goethes sprang up all around us, wantoning in *nonchalance* and the fopperies of comprehensiveness. The thing was found to be easier even than Byronism, requiring no scowls, no cursing and swearing, no increased expenditure for cravats and gin; and, accordingly, one could hardly venture into society without meeting some youthful *blasé*, whose commonplace was trumpeted as comprehension, whose intellectual laziness was dignified with the appellation of repose, and whose many-sidedness was the feeble expression of a personality without sufficient force to rise even into one-sidedness.

So far we have considered character principally as

it works in practical affairs and in literature; but perhaps its grandest and mightiest exemplifications are in those rare men who have passed up, through a process of life and growth, from the actual world into the region of universal sentiments and great spiritual ideas. Every step in the progress of such men is through material and spiritual facts, each of which is looked into, looked through, and converted into force for further advance. The final elevation they attain, being the consequence of natural growth, has none of the instability of heights reached by occasional raptures of aspiration, but is as solid and as firm as it is high; and their characters, expressed in deeds all alive with moral energy, are fountains whence the world is continually replenished with a new and nobler life. A great and comprehensive person of this exalted order, to whom the imaginations of the poet seem but the commonplaces of the heaven in which he dwells, is not to be confounded with his counterfeits, that is, with certain agile natures that leap, with one bound of thought, from the every-day world to an abstract and mocking ideal; and, perched on their transitory elevation, fleer and gibe at the social system to which they really belong, and of which, with all its sins and follies, they are far from being the best or the wisest members. The impression left

by the reality is radiant spiritual power; the impression left by the counterfeit is simply pertness.

But let a great character, with the celestial city actually organized within him, descend upon a community to revolutionize and reform, and, in the conflict which ensues, he is sure to be victorious, for he is strong with a diviner strength than earth knows, and wields weapons whose stroke no mortal armor can withstand. If he come at all, he comes in a bodily form, and he comes to disturb; and society, with a bright apprehension of these two facts, has heretofore thought it a shrewd contrivance to remove him to another world before he had utterly disordered this. But in this particular case its axes, and gibbets, and fires could not apply; for the tremendous personality it sought to put out of the way had been built up by an assimilation of the life of things; and all mortal engines were therefore powerless to destroy one glowing atom of his solid and immortally persisting nature. Accordingly, after his martyrdom, he is the same strange, intrusive, pertinacious, resistless force that he was before; active as ever in every part of the social frame; pervading the community by degrees with his peculiar life; glaring in upon his murderers in their most secret nooks of retirement; rising, like the ghost of Banquo, to spread horror and amaze-

ment over their feasts; searing their eyeballs with strange "sights," even in the public markets; nor does he put off the torment of his presence until the cowards who slew him have gone, like Henry the Second, to the tomb of Becket, and, in the agonies of fear and remorse, have canonized him as a saint.

In these scattered remarks on a subject broad as human life, and various as the actual and possible combinations of the elements of human nature, I have attempted to indicate the great vital fact in human affairs, that all influential power, in all the departments of practical intellectual and moral energy, is the expression of character, of forcible, persisting, and calculable persons, who have grown up into a stature more or less colossal through an assimilation of material or spiritual realities. This fact makes production the test and measure of power, imprints on production the mental and moral imperfections of that power, and, with a kind of sullen sublimity, declares that as a man is so shall be his work. It thus remorselessly tears off all the gaudy ornaments of opinion and phrase with which conceit bedizens weakness, and exhibits each person in his essential personality. The contemplation of this fact, like the contemplation of all facts, may sadden the sentimental and the luxurious, as it reveals Alps to climb, not

bowers of bliss to bask in; but to manly natures, who disdain the trappings of pretension, the prospect is healthy, and the sharp sleet air invigorating. By showing that men and things are not so good or so great as they seem, it may destroy the hope born of our dreams; but it is the source of another and more bracing hope, born of activity and intelligence. By the acidity with which it mocks the lazy aspirations, blown up as bubbles from the surface of natures which are really crumbling into dust amidst their pretty playthings, this fact may seem a sneering devil; but if it start into being one genuine thrill of vital thought, or touch that inmost nerve of activity whence character derives its force, it will be found to cheer and to point upward like other angels of the Lord.

II.

ECCENTRIC CHARACTER.

ONE of the most prominent characteristics which strike an observer of human life is the sulky, sleepy common sense which shapes, guides, and limits its ordinary affairs; a common sense fruitful of definite opinions, creative of stable works, solid, persevering, consistent, intolerant of innovation, contemptuous of abstract truth and ideal right, and most sublimely content with itself. This common intelligence, the democracy of reason, the wits love to stigmatize as stupidity, because it rigorously resists all substitution of smart sayings for commodious institutions, and is insensible to the value of all thoughts which will not hitch on to things. It believes in bread, beef, houses, laws, trade, talent, the prices-current, the regular course of events, and, perhaps, in the spirituality of table-knockings; it disbelieves in total abstinence, woman's rights, transcendentalism, perfectibility, and to the humane interrogation "Am I not a man and a brother?" it stoutly answers, "No,

you are not!" The great merit of this common sense consists in its representing the average intellect and conscience of the civilized world, — of that portion of intelligence, morality, and Christianity which has been practically embodied in life and active power. It destroys pretence and quackery, and tests genius and heroism. It changes with the progress of society; persecutes in one age what it adopts in the next; its martyrs of the sixteenth century are its precedents and exponents of the nineteenth; and a good part of the common sense of an elder day is the common nonsense of our own. It would decay and die out were it not continually nourished by the new and freshening life poured into it by the creative thinkers whom it denounces as unpractical visionaries. It always yields in the end to every person who represents a higher intellectual, moral, or spiritual energy than its own, and the grandest achievement of individual power is the conception of a new thought of such indestructible and victorious vitality, that it breaks through all the obstacles which obstruct the passage of heresies into truisms, and converts private opinion into common sense.

It would seem to be a good law of life that men should be thus associated in mental recognition of common principles of intelligence, level to their ordi-

nary actions, and thus present a solid bulwark of sound character, on which pretension should try its tricks, and nonsense spend its fury, in vain, but which genuine intellectual or moral energy might overturn or overleap. The great office of common sense is to set up the general wisdom and the general will against the caprices of individual opinion and the excesses of self-will. Its maxims and proverbs constitute a kind of intellectual currency, issued, apparently, on the authority of human nature, and based on the experience of sixty centuries. The deviations from its established order, whether the deviations of whim or the deviations of genius, it calls Eccentricity. The essential characteristic of this order consists in its disposing things according to their mutual relations, — the natural relations they would assume in practical life, provided they received no twists from individual vanity, or conceit, or passion. Eccentricity is the disturbance of the relations enjoined by common sense, and a habit of looking at things, not in their relations to each other, but in their relations to the dominant wilfulness of the individual. Its most ordinary form is the rebellion of mediocrity against the laws of its own order. When this proceeds on any grounds of original disposition, it soon exalts caprice into a principle and organizes crotchets

into character. Men of this stamp, in whose huddled minds disorder is welded together by a kind of crazy force of individuality, commonly pass for more than they are worth. Their self-will, the parent of boundless impudence and furious self-assertion, gives audacity to intellectual littleness, raciness to intellectual anarchy, and a certain flash and sparkle to meanness and malice. The little brain they have, thus galvanized by constant contact with the personal pronoun, presents a grand exhibition of mediocrity in convulsions, of spite in spasms, of impulses in insurrection animating thoughts in heaps. Commonplaces are made to look like novelties by being shot forth in hysteric bursts. Startling paradoxes are created out of inverted truisms. The delirium of impatient sensations is put forward as the rapture of heaven-scaling imaginations. Yet through all the jar, and discord, and fussy miscreativeness of such chaotic minds there runs an unmistakable individuality, by which you can discriminate one crazy head from another, and refer the excesses of each to their roots in character.

It is only, however, when eccentricity connects itself with genius that we have its raciest and most riotous disregard of the restraints of custom and the maxims of experience. Sane and healthy genius, it is true, is often at war with recognized principles

without being eccentric. If it violates the conventional order, and disturbs the practical relations of things, it is because it discerns a higher order, and discovers relations more essential. Eccentricity views things in relation to its own crotchet; genius, in relation to a new idea. There is a world-wide difference between the eccentric fanaticism of John of Munster and the religious genius of Martin Luther, though both assailed the established order. But genius itself sometimes falls under the dominion of wilfulness and whim, and it then creates magnificent crotchets of its own. Let us now survey this twofold eccentricity of ordinary and extraordinary minds, as it appears in social life, in the arena of politics and government, in religion, and, in its more refined expression, in literature and art.

In regard to the eccentricities of character developed in social life, the most prominent relate to the freaks of impulse and passion. In most old communities there is a common sense even in sensuality. Vice itself gets gradually digested into a system, is amenable to certain laws of conventional propriety and honor, has for its object simply the gratification of its appetites, and frowns with quite a conservative air on all new inventions, all untried experiments, in iniquity. There is often, for instance, in gluttony,

a solid and stolid respectability, a calm and grand devotion of the whole man to the gastronomic ecstasy, which evinces that appetite has been organized into faith and life. Thus Doctor Johnson, at a Lord Mayor's dinner, committed the scandalous impropriety of talking wit and wisdom to an alderman by his side, who desired to concentrate his whole energies on the turtle. "Sir," said the alderman, in a tone and with a look of awful rebuke, "in attempting to listen to your long sentences, and give you a short answer, I have swallowed two pieces of green fat, without tasting the flavor. I beg you to let me enjoy my present happiness in peace." Examples might be multiplied of the gravity and sobriety which vices assume when they are institutions as well as appetites.

But the spoiled children of wealth, rank, and fashion soon profess themselves bored with this time-honored, instituted, and decorous dissoluteness, and demand something more stimulating and *piquant*, something which will tickle vanity and plume will. A certain crazy vehemence of individual life, in which impatience of restraint is combined with a desire to startle, leads them to attempt to scale the eminences of immorality by originalities in lawlessness and discoveries in diabolism. Despising the timid

science of the old fogies of sensuality, these bright young fellows let loose all the reins of restraint, flame out in all the volatilities of sin and vagaries of vice, and aim to realize a festivity dashed with insanity and spiced with satanic pride. They desire not merely wine, but the "devil's wine"; something which will give a zest, a sharp, tingling, fearful, wicked relish to excess. They have a kind of "hunger and thirst after unrighteousness"; and, poets in dissipation, pursue a constantly receding ideal of frantic delight. Their deity of pleasure is the bewitching daughter of sin and death, who streams mockingly before their inward vision with flushed cheeks, crazy, sparkling eyes, and mad, dishevelled tresses. Such were Buckingham, Rochester, Wharton, Queensberry, — noble *roués*, high in the peerage of debauch, whose brilliant rascality illustrates the annals of eccentric libertinism; who devoted their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to the rights of reprobates, and raised infamy itself to a kind of fame; — men who had a sublime ambition to become heroes in sensuality, and seem to have taken for their model that Dionysius of Sicily whom Plutarch commemorates as having prolonged a drunken feast through ninety days. Rochester, when he fell into the hands of Bishop Burnet, could hardly recollect the time when he had

been sober, and might, with the amiable simplicity recorded of another inebriate, have staggered into an intelligence office, to know where he had been for the last ten years. Wharton, bragging to Swift of his drunken frolics, was advised by that cynical satirist to vary his caprices a little, and take a frolic to be virtuous. Indeed, in these men the "wet damnation" of drunkenness seems to have filtered through their senses into their souls, so as to make reason reel and conscience stagger, and the whole man to decline from an immoral into an unmoral being. Yet this suicide of soul and body is, by such disciples and martyrs of pleasure, ludicrously misnamed "life." Its philosophy is concentrated in a remark made by George Selwyn, as he surveyed himself in the glass, the day after a heroic debauch: "I look and feel villanously bad," he said; "but, hang it, it is life,—it is life!"

These devotees and fanatics of pleasure represent that form of eccentricity in which the head seems too small for the passions of the individual to move about in, and they accordingly appear to craze and rend the brain in the desperate effort to escape from their prison. But there are other eccentrics in whom we observe the opposite process, persons whose thoughts and feelings are all turned inward, and group or

huddle round some conceit of their wilfulness, some hobby of their intellect, or some master disposition of their selfishness. These are the men who gradually become insane on some one darling peculiarity of character, which is exaggerated into huge size by assiduous training. It is, as Sir Thomas Browne would say, "an acorn in their young brows which grows to an oak in their old heads." Conceit, for instance, often ends in making a man mentally and morally deaf and blind. He hears nothing but the whispers of vanity, he sees nothing but what is reflected in the mirror of self-esteem, though society all the while may be on the broad grin or in a civil titter at his pompous nothingness. He will doubt everything before he doubts his own importance; and his folly, being based on a solid foundation of self-delusion, steals out of him in the most unconscious and innocent way in the world. Thus the proud Duke of Somerset, whose conceit was in his rank and his long line of forefathers, once declared that he sincerely pitied Adam because he had no ancestors. The Earl of Buchan, a poor aristocrat, was accustomed to brood in his Edinburgh garret over the deeds and splendors of his ancestors, until he identified himself with them, and would startle his acquaintances with the remark, "When I was in

Palestine with Richard of the Lion Heart," or, "As I was going to see the execution of Charles the First," such and such things occurred. His greater brother, Erskine, the glory of Westminster Hall, was an egotist of genius, and was such a spendthrift of the personal pronoun, that Cobbett, who was once printing one of his speeches, stopped in the middle, giving as his reason, that at this point the "I's" in his fount of type gave out, and he could not proceed. This egotism, which in Erskine was mingled with genius and good-nature, often frets itself into a morbid unreasonableness which is satire-proof. Thus we heard but the other day of an eccentric German who prosecuted an author who had anticipated him in the publication of an invention, on the ground that the idea had been abstracted from his own head through a process of animal magnetism. But the most sovereign and malignant of these eccentric egotists was undoubtedly Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, who, while she lived, was the most terrible creature in Great Britain. She bullied Queen Anne, and she henpecked the Great Duke himself, who, serene as a summer morning in a tempest of bullets, cowered in his own palace before her imperious will. She defied everything, death included. Indeed, death, like everybody else, seemed to be afraid of her. In her

old age she became as ugly and as spiteful a crone as ever was ducked or burned for witchcraft. She took a malicious delight in living, because, though life gave her no pleasure, it gave others pain. At one time it was thought she must go. She lay for a great while speechless and senseless. The physician said, "She must be blistered or she will die." This touched her, and she screamed out, "*I won't be blistered, and I won't die!*" and she kept her word.

But the mirth of society changes to wailing when this conceit develops itself into a hobby, and takes men by the button to pester them with the *rationale* of its bit of absurdity. The hobby-monger is the only perfect and consummated bore, and eccentricity in him becomes a very dismal joke. Self-convinced of the value of his original, deeply cogitated piece of nonsense, he is determined to devote his life, and your money, to the task of converting his great thought into a great fact, and to make incapacity itself a source of income. The thing is a new mode of levying black-mail, for the cheapest way to escape from the teasing persecution of his tongue is to deliver up your purse. His success generates a whole brood of blockheads, who install hobbyism into an institution, and flood the country with hobby patriotism, hobby science, hobby medicine, hobby philan-

thropy, hobby theology, hobby morality, and hobby immorality. Dunces who never had but one thought in their lives, — and that a foolish one, — they cling to that with the tenacity of instinct, and set up, on the strength of it, as Galileos, or Arkwrights, or Clarksons, or Luthers, transmuting sneers, gibes, invectives, blows, into a sweet, celestial ichor, to slake the thirst of their conceit. They are, to be sure, very candid gentlemen. Their cry is, "Examine before you condemn." Ah! examine; but, since the lamented decease of Methuselah, human life has been unfortunately contracted, and human knowledge unfortunately enlarged, and it is really the coolest impertinence imaginable to expect that a man will spend his short existence in inspecting and exploding humbugs, and end at fourscore in establishing a principle which he ought to have taken on trust in his teens. It is better to ride a hobby of one's own than to give one's whole attention to discovering the futility of the hobbies of others; and better still, as these gentlemen are determined that society shall support them, to save time by submitting to assessment. In our country the hobby-mongers seem fairly to be in the ascendant, and the right to mind one's own business must be purchased of these idle dunces portentously developed into voluble bores. Whatever may be their

plan, and however deep may be their self-deception, their principle of action is identical with that of Punch's music-grinder, who contemptuously refuses the penny you toss at him, to silence his soul-stabbing melodies, and clamorously demands a shilling as the price of his "moving on." "Don't you suppose," he inquires, "that I know the vally of peace and quietness as well as you?"

But the conceit of one's self and the conceit of one's hobby are hardly more prolific of eccentricity than the conceit of one's money. Avarice, the most hateful and wolfish of all the hard, cool, callous dispositions of selfishness, has its own peculiar caprices and crotchets. The ingenuities of its meanness defy all the calculations of reason, and reach the miraculous in subtlety. Foote, in endeavoring to express the microscopic niggardliness of a miser of his acquaintance, expressed a belief that he would be willing to take the *beam* out of his own eye if he knew he could sell the timber. Doubtless one source of the eccentric miser's insane covetousness and parsimony is the tormenting fear of dying a beggar, — that "fine horror of poverty," according to Lamb, "by which he is not content to keep want from the door, or at arm's length, but he places it, by heaping wealth upon wealth, *at a sublime distance.*"

Well, after saving, and pinching, and scraping, and stealing, and freezing, and starving, Curmudgeon, the skeleton, comes face to face with another skeleton, Death, and that fleshless form, with an ironic grin, huddles him away, — and he is remembered only by those he has cheated. But his perverse sharpness does not desert him even in his last hours. Scrooge is reported to be dying. It is said that in his will he has left something to a charitable society, and the secretary thereof "happens in," to console him. "You think," says Scrooge, with a malicious sparkle in his closing eyes, "that I am going, but the doctor says the attack is not fatal. If you will take that bequest now, at a deduction of ten per cent, I'll pay it." "Done!" said the secretary. "Done!" says Scrooge, and dies, — dies consistent and triumphant, with a discount on his lips instead of a prayer.

It is, however, in politics and public affairs that the strange antics of eccentricity produce the smartest shocks of surprise. Here everything is done in the eyes of men, and disordered minds parade their caprices to a laughing or cursing world. In this sphere of action and passion it is impossible to group or define. The representation tends to become as wild and whirling as the vagaries, volatilities, and inconsistencies it describes. It requires more than

ordinary steadiness of character for a statesman to escape from the eccentricities produced by ambition, and the eccentricities produced by reaching the object of ambition, — power. The strife of politics tends to unsettle the calmest understanding, and ulcerate the most benevolent heart. There are no bigotries or absurdities too gross for parties to create or adopt under the stimulus of political passions. The path of all great statesmen lies between two opposing insanities, and we can never appreciate the superb serenity of such men as Washington, Hamilton, Jay, Jefferson, Madison, until we realize the atmosphere of madness, rancor, and folly they were compelled to breathe. There, for instance, among other causes or occasions of political eccentricity, is the love of innovation in itself, and the hatred of innovation in itself; both productive of eccentric partisans, in whose struggles common sense is suspended by mutual consent. By the eccentric reformer, institutions are denounced as confining Liberty in strait-waistcoats; by the eccentric conservative, Liberty is denounced as putting firebrands into the hands of madmen. Thus many of our disgusted American conservatives applauded Louis Napoleon's usurpation on the ground that he would restore old abuses, and saw France, with delight, leap back thousands of years to the old

Egyptian monarchy of kings, priests, and soldiers. Gibbon, though the most subtle of religious sceptics, had a morbid hatred of political change, and, on the breaking out of the French Revolution, joined the bishops of the Established Church in assailing it. He could not help, however, indulging an ironical fling at the new political friends who were his old theological enemies, and blandly reminded them that if, in his history, he had been a little hard on the primitive church, it was from the best of principles and the best of motives, for that church was an *innovation* on the old Pagan Establishment. But the greatest conservative of this sort was Lord-Chancellor Thurlow. A deputation of Presbyterians having waited on him to request his aid in obtaining the repeal of certain statutes disqualifying their body from holding civil offices, Thurlow thus bluffly answered: "Gentlemen, I will be perfectly frank with you. Gentlemen, I am against you, and for the Established Church, by ——! Not that I like the Established Church a bit better than any other church, but because it *is* established. And whenever you can get your —— religion established, I'll be for that too. Good morning to you!"

In the eccentricity of politicians the two most striking qualities are levity and malignity, — some-

times existing apart, and sometimes coexisting in one mind. The most magnificent instance of levity, combined with genius and eloquence, is found, perhaps, in Charles Townshend, the chancellor of the exchequer, who revived the scheme of American taxation, and who carried into the councils of Great Britain a brain large enough for the weightiest affairs, but intoxicated with impudence, conceit, and champagne. The conceptions of a statesman and the courage of a hero were strangely blended in him with a spirit as volatile, sparkling, and unscrupulous as ever animated the rake of the old comedy. It was as if Sir Harry Wildair's tricksiness and mercurial temperament had passed into the head of Camden or Chatham. In the majority of cases, however, the ambition or possession of power develops malignity in disordered minds. In John Randolph it took the shape of a fretful spite which poisoned all it touched, even his own fine faculties. This mingled levity and malignity, however, are never seen in their full absurdities and terrors, unless power be absolute, and caprice ranges over a kingdom or an empire, unrestrained by opinion or law. From the old Oriental despots to "the thing of blood and mud" that lately sat throned in Naples, the history of eccentric despots presents such a spectacle of monkey-like mischievousness com-

bined with demon-like malice, that we can hardly recognize human nature in a form so diabolically caricatured. In Nero, Caligula, Domitian, Commodus, Heliogabalus, Paul of Russia, we observe that peculiar perversity which does wrong things *because* they are wrong; and also that last resource of little minds, the desire to startle by the commission of unnatural crimes, evincing the feebleness and barrenness of talent so apt to be associated with such monstrous brutality of disposition. Nero, for example, finds that the luxury of murder palls on his jaded sense, and the poor creature can hit upon no stimulant likely to keep alive his relish for that form of ferocity short of murdering his wife and mother; and at the end — for under such governments there is a decline so deep in the character of the virtues that treachery becomes justice, and assassination becomes patriotism — he dies as thoroughly *blasé* as a London coxcomb, and as abjectly timid as a girl who has seen a ghost.

This eccentric malignity is also often developed in men whose minds are unsettled by their being lifted, in the tempests of faction, to a power they are unfitted to exercise. They are Pucks raised to the seat of Jove. Even Robespierre, — who before he became a politician resigned a judicial office be-

cause he was opposed to capital punishment, — seemed to have been marked out by nature for an opinionated philanthropist, sour and wilful withal, but well-meaning, honest, self-sacrificing, narrow in mind, and obstinate in purpose. When he came to be the head of that prolonged mob, the government of France during the Reign of Terror, the poverty of his talents compelled him to meet the crisis of affairs by the exploded maxims of the old tyrants. Like all incompetent men who are cursed with power, he tried to make violence do the work of insight and foresight. He slew because he could not think. He ended in being fiendish because he started in being foolish. The little thought he had took the shape of an inexorable but bad logic. He tried to solve a political problem, which might have tasked the genius, energy, and experience of the greatest statesman, with a little syllogism, of which the Rights of Man and the chopping off the heads of aristocrats constituted the premises, and of which peace, happiness, equality, and fraternity were to be the logical conclusion. The more he chopped, however, the more complicated became his difficulties. New and more puzzling problems sprang up from the soil he watered with blood. The time came when mere perversity and presumption could carry it no longer. His adherents informed him at night that he was to

be denounced and slain in the Convention on the morrow, and offered him the means of crushing his enemies. He leaned that barren head of his against a pillar, and for two hours tried to frame some plan by which to carry on the government in case he triumphed. But the poor fellow's invention had been exhausted in the production of his little syllogism, which had miserably failed of success. He could do nothing, he saw, but go on murdering and murdering, and he had got somewhat tired of that. The thought that would open a path through the entanglements of his situation would not come into that unfertile brain. So, in mere despair, he told his adherents to let things take their course, went to the Convention, uttered his usual declamation, was denounced, set upon, and slain; and thus a capital leader of a debating club, like many a clever man before and since, was ruined by the misfortune of being placed at the head of a nation.

It is both impossible to avoid, and dangerous to touch, in an essay like this, the subject of religious eccentricity, though the deviations here from the line of admitted truths and duties are innumerable in amount and variety. There is, first, the eccentricity which proceeds from observing the proprieties of piety while practising the precepts of atheism, — the linen

decencies of behavior contrasting strangely with the coarse vices of conduct. Thus Madame de Montespan, who found it for her interest and vanity to live in habitual violation of the Seventh Commandment, was so rigorous in her devotions that she weighed her bread in Lent. Cardinal Bernis, the most worthless of abbés, owed his advancement in the Church to Madame de Pompadour, the most worthless of women, and then refused "to communicate in the dignity of the purple with a woman of so unsanctimonious a character." Next there is the perverted ingenuity by which creeds are spangled all over with crotchets, and the Bible made the basis for conceits as subtle as Cowley's and as ridiculous as Sprat's. Who first doubled the Cape of Good Hope? Vasco da Gama, you will answer. "No," replies Vieyra, a priest of Portugal; "one man passed it before he did." "Who?" "Jonah in the whale's belly!" The whale, it seems, from the account of this all-knowing geographer, "went out of the Mediterranean, because he had no other course; kept the coast of Africa on the left, scoured along Ethiopia, on the shores of Nineveh, and making his tongue serve as a paddle, landed the Prophet there." Next, there is the capricious suspension of the damnatory clauses of a creed, out of respect to eminent individuals, who can give

benefices if they cannot practise duties. Kings have immensely profited by this ecclesiastical urbanity, having been allowed to pass sweetly from riot and rapine in this world to rest and reward in the next. "Louis the well-beloved," said the priest who announced the death of Louis the Fifteenth, "sleeps in the Lord." "If such a mass of laziness and lust," growls Carlyle, in reply, "sleep in the Lord, who, think you, sleeps elsewhere?"

But the most ordinary source of the impious piety and irreverent veneration of eccentric religionists is the substitution of an idolatry of self for the worship of God, the individual projecting his own opinions and passions into the texts of Scripture and the government of the universe, and thus making a Supreme Being out of the colossal exaggerations of self-will. Under the impulse of a ravenous egoism, Nature and the Bible are converted into an immense magnifying-glass of his own personality, and the Deity with him is but an infinite reflection of himself. Such is ever the tendency and process of fanaticism, and therefore it is that so many gods are often worshipped in one Church. We often smile at the last excess of pagan despotism, the demand of tyrants that divine honors shall be paid to them; but the same claim is now often urged by little tyrants, who, having divi-

nized their stupidity, inhumanity, or malignity, strut about in quite a furious fashion at their divinity being disallowed, flinging the fussy thunderbolts of their impotent wrath with the air of Joves and the strength of pygmies! What, think you, would these gentlemen do in case they possessed arbitrary power? If the imagination breaks down in the attempt to conceive their possible enormities, the history of religious persecution will be of essential aid in filling up the gaps and enlarging the scope of the most fertile and wide-wandering fancy. The cant of our day, which resents all attempts to analyze bad opinions down to their roots in bad dispositions, is prone to dismiss the great theological criminals of history with the smooth remark that they were sincere in their Satanic inhumanities. They used the rack and the hot iron, — they maimed, tormented, gibbeted, burned, beheaded, crucified, it is true; but then they practised these little *diablerie* from a sincere sense of duty! Sincere, indeed! To be sure they were sincere. They acted honestly and directly from their characters. Their thoughts, feelings, deeds, — all were of a piece. But out of what interior hell must such devil's notions of duty and Deity have sprung? How much better it would be to strike at the heart of the matter, and acknowledge at once, in the sharp,

incisive sarcasm of Bishop Warburton, that these men acted thus because "they made God after man's image, and took the worst possible models at that, — themselves."

If human life, in so many departments of thought and action, thus sparkles or glares with eccentric characters, it is evident that they must occupy a large space in the world's representative literature. Indeed, from Aristophanes down to Thackeray, genius, though often itself bristling with eccentricities, has been quick to discern, and cunning to embody, the eccentricities of others. The representation has been scornful or genial according as wit or humor has predominated in the observing mind. In a majority of cases, however, the whims, caprices, crotchets, ruling passions, intrusive egotisms, which make their possessors butts or bores to common sense, are by the man of mirthful genius so brightened, interpreted, softened, and humanized, and made to glide into such ludicrous forms of grotesque character, that they are converted into attractive boon companions in the festivities of mind. Two great writers in English literature, Shakespeare and Scott, have been pre-eminently successful in this embodiment of eccentric character, Shakespeare individualizing its various kinds, Scott imitating its individual specimens. Lower in the

scale, and widely differing in their manner, are Ben Jonson, Vanbrugh, Fielding, Smollett, Miss Burney, Thackeray, Dickens. The author of "Tristram Shandy" occupies in literature a delicious and original little world of his own, answering to the quaint craze in the fine creative genius of Laurence Sterne. Addison, another original, has made oddities the objects of affection by insinuating into them the shy humanities of his beneficent humor; and in Sir Roger de Coverley has clothed eccentricity with innocence and sanctified it with love, while he has made it touch and unseal those fountains of merriment which sleep in the innermost recesses of the heart. Our own Irving, who felt the attraction of Addison's beautiful reserve while in the act of rushing off himself into caricature, commenced his career by welcoming the broader outlines of eccentricity with riotous, roaring laughter, and ended with surveying its finer shades with a demure smile. Goldsmith, again, half-lovingly, half-laughingly, pictures forth foibles of vanity, and caprices of benevolence, and amiable little crotchets of understanding, which he discerns peeping slyly out from corners and crevices of his own busy brain. You can almost hear and see these wits and humorists through the expressive movement of their respective styles. Steele titters as he delineates.

Dryden chuckles, Swift scowls, Pope hisses, as, in wit which is to provoke the mirth of millions, they endow some dunce with the immortality of contempt. And then the more genial and subtle of the humorists have such an art in allowing character to develop itself! The folly, or erratic disposition, or queer twist of mind or morals, seems to leak out unwittingly, to escape unawares. The man is self-exposed without being himself conscious of exposure, and goes on claiming your interest or pity in words which excite your mirth or scorn. It is like Captain Rook's attempt to rouse the sympathy of his fashionable friends for his losses at the gaming-table. "I lost," he says, "four thousand pounds last night, and the worst of it is, five pounds were in cash."

In these writers, however, eccentricity is viewed more or less didactically or dramatically. There are others whose eccentricities are personal, and shape and color all they see and describe. Such are Fuller, Burton, and Sir Thomas Browne. But perhaps the most delightful and popular of this class is Charles Lamb, — a man cosily domesticated by the heart's fireside of his readers. Such wit, such humor, such imagination, such intelligence, such sentiment, such kindliness, such heroism, all so quaintly mixed and mingled, and stuttering out in so freakish a fashion,

and all blending so finely in that exquisite eccentric something which we call the character of Charles Lamb, make him the most lovable of writers and men. His essays, the gossip of creative genius, are of a piece with the records of his life and conversation. Whether saluting his copy of Chapman's "Homer" with a kiss, — or saying a grace before reading Milton, — or going to the theatre to see his own farce acted, and joining in the hisses of the pit when it fails, — or sagely wondering if the Ogles of Somerset are not descendants of King Lear, — or telling Barry Cornwall not to invite a lugubrious gentleman to dinner because his face would cast a damp over a funeral, — or giving as a reason why he did not leave off smoking, the difficulty of finding an equivalent *vice*, — or striking into a hot controversy between Coleridge and Holcroft, as to whether man as he is, or man as he is to be, is preferable, and settling the dispute by saying, "Give me man as he is *not* to be," — or doing some deed of kindness and love with tears in his eyes and a pun on his lips, — he is always the same dear, strange, delightful companion and friend. He is never — the rogue — without a scrap of logic to astound common sense. "Mr. Lamb," says the head clerk at the India House, "you come down very late in the morning!" "Yes, sir," Mr

Lamb replies, "but then you know I go home very early in the afternoon." And then with what humorous extravagance he expresses his peevishness at being confined to such work, — with curious ingenuity running his malediction on commerce along all its lines of influence. "Confusion blast all mercantile transactions, all traffic, exchange of commodities, intercourse between nations, all the consequent civilization, and wealth, and amity, and link of society, and getting rid of prejudices, and knowledge of the face of the globe; and rot all the firs of the forest, that look so romantic alive, and die into desks." It is impossible to cheat this frolicsome humorist with any pretence, any exaggerated sentiment, any of the *dome-goodisms* of well-meaning moral feebleness. A lady sends him "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife," for his perusal and guidance. He returns it with this quatrain written on a fly-leaf, expressing the slight disagreement between his views of matrimony and those entertained by Miss Hannah More: —

> "If ever I marry a wife,
> I'll marry a landlord's daughter,
> And sit in the bar all day,
> And drink cold brandy and water."

If he thus slips out of controversy by making the broadest absurdities the vehicles of the finest insight,

his sense and enjoyment of absurdities in others rises to rapture. The nonsensical ingenuity of the pamphlet in which his friend Capel Lofft took the ground that Napoleon, while in the hands of the English, might sue out a writ of *habeas corpus*, threw him into ecstasies. And not only has he quips and quirks and twisted words for all he sees and feels, but he has the pleasantest art of making his very maladies interesting by transmuting them into jests. Out of the darkest depths of the "dismals" fly some of his happiest conceits. "My bedfellows," he writes to Wordsworth, "are cough and cramp. We sleep three in a bed." "How is it," he says, "that I cannot get rid of this cold? It can't be from a lack of care. I have studiously been out all these rainy nights until twelve o'clock, have had my feet wet constantly, drank copiously of brandy to allay inflammation, and done everything else to cure it, and yet it won't depart," —a sage decision, worthy of that illustrious physician who told his patient that, if he had no serious drawbacks, he would probably be worse in a week. To crown all, and to make the character perfect in its winning contradictions, there beats beneath the fantastic covering and incalculable caprices of the humorist the best heart in the world, capable of courtesy, of friendship, of love, of heroic self-devotion, and unostentatious self-sacrifice.

In this desultory survey of some of the expressions of eccentric character in social life, in politics, in religion, in literature, we have aimed to exhibit eccentricity in its principles as far as so slippery, elastic, and elusive a quality will consent to submit itself to the limits of definition. We have endeavored to show that it is a deviation from reason and common sense for the gratification of self-will or the indulgence of some original craze in the faculties, and that this deviation tends to levity or malignity according as the nature is sweet or savage. We have seen that, airy, innocent, and sportive as it may be in the whims of beautiful natures, it has often led to follies so gross, and crimes so enormous, that their actors seem to have escaped from their humanity into brutes or demons. And in this slight view of the morbid phenomena of human nature we cannot fail to see how important is that pressure on the individual of institutions and other minds to keep his caprices in check, and educate and discipline him into reason and usefulness, and what a poor mad creature a man is likely to become when this pressure is removed. Freedom no less than order is the product of inward or outward restraint; and that large and liberal discourse of intelligence which thinks into the meaning of institutions, and enters into communion with other

minds, — which is glad to believe that the reason of the race through sixty centuries of gradual development carries with it more authority than some wild freak or flash of its own conceit, — this it is which emancipates man from egotism, passion, and folly; which puts into his will the fine instinct of wisdom; which makes him tolerant as well as earnest, and merciful as well as just; which connects his thoughts with things, and opens a passage for them into the common consciousness of men; and which, chaining impulse to liberate intelligence, and rounding in eccentricity with the restraints of reason, enlarges his intellect only to inform his conscience, doubles his power by giving it a right direction, and purifies his nature from vanity and self-will, to bind him, in the beneficent bonds of a common sympathy and a common sense, to the rights, interests, and advancement of a common humanity.

III.

INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER.

THE desire, the duty, the necessity of the age in which we live is education, or that culture which develops, enlarges, and enriches each individual intelligence, according to the measure of its capacity, by familiarizing it with the facts and laws of nature and human life. But, in this rage for information, we too often overlook the mental constitution of the being we would inform, — detaching the apprehensive from the active powers, weakening character by overloading memory, and reaping a harvest of imbeciles after we may have flattered ourselves we had sown a crop of geniuses. No person can be called educated, until he has organized his knowledge into faculty, and can wield it as a weapon. We purpose, therefore, to invite the attention of our readers to some remarks on Intellectual Character, the last and highest result of intellectual education, and the indispensable condition of intellectual success.

It is evident, that, when a young man leaves his

school or college to take his place in the world, it is indispensable that he *be* something as well as *know* something; and it will require but little experience to demonstrate to him that what he really knows is little more than what he really is, and that his progress in intellectual manhood is not more determined by the information he retains, than by that portion which, by a benign provision of Providence, he is enabled to forget. Youth, to be sure, is his, — youth, in virtue of which he is free of the universe, — youth, with its elastic vigor, its far-darting hopes, its generous impatience of prudent meanness, its grand denial of instituted falsehood, its beautiful contempt of accredited baseness, — but youth which must now concentrate its wayward energies, which must discourse with facts and grapple with men, and, through strife and struggle, and the sad wisdom of experience, must pass from the vague delights of generous impulses to the assured joy of manly principles. The moment he comes in contact with the stern and stubborn realities which frown on his entrance into practical life, he will find that power is the soul of knowledge, and character the condition of intelligence. He will discover that intellectual success depends primarily on qualities which are not strictly intellectual, but personal and constitutional. The test of success is in-

fluence, — that is, the power of shaping events by informing, guiding, animating, controlling other minds. Whether this influence be exerted directly in the world of practical affairs, or indirectly in the world of ideas, its fundamental condition is still force of individual being, and the amount of influence is the measure of the degree of force, just as an effect measures a cause. The characteristic of intellect is insight, — insight into things and their relations; but then this insight is intense or languid, clear or confused, comprehensive or narrow, exactly in proportion to the weight and power of the individual who sees and combines. It is not so much the intellect that makes the man, as the man the intellect; in every act of earnest thinking, the reach of the thought depends on the pressure of the will; and we would therefore emphasize and enforce, as the primitive requirement of intellectual success, that discipline of the individual which develops dim tendencies into positive sentiments, sentiments into ideas, and ideas into abilities, — that discipline by which intellect is penetrated through and through with the qualities of manhood, and endowed with arms as well as eyes. This is Intellectual Character.

Now it should be thundered in the ears of every young man who has passed through that course of

instruction ironically styled education, "What do you intend to be, and what do you intend to do? Do you purpose to play at living, or do you purpose to live? — to be a memory, a word-cistern, a feeble prater on illustrious themes, one of the world's thousand chatterers, or a will, a power, a man? No varnish and veneer of scholarship, no command of the tricks of logic and rhetoric, can ever make you a positive force in the world. Look around you in the community of educated men, and see how many, who started on their career with minds as bright and eager, and hearts as hopeful as yours, have been mysteriously arrested in their growth, — have lost all the kindling sentiments which glorified their youthful studies, and dwindled into complacent echoes of surrounding mediocrity, — have begun, indeed, to die on the very threshold of manhood, and stand in society as tombs rather than temples of immortal souls. See, too, the wide disconnection between knowledge and life; heaps of information piled upon little heads; everybody speaking, — few who have earned the right to speak; maxims enough to regenerate a universe, — a woful lack of great hearts, in which reason, right, and truth, regal and militant, are fortified and encamped! Now this disposition to skulk the austere requirements of intellectual growth in an in-

dolent surrender of the mind's power of self-direction must be overcome at the outset, or, in spite of your grand generalities, you will be at the mercy of every bullying lie, and strike your colors to every mean truism, and shape your life in accordance with every low motive, which the strength of genuine wickedness or genuine stupidity can bring to bear upon you!" There is no escape from slavery, or the mere pretence of freedom, but in radical individual power; and all solid intellectual culture is simply the right development of individuality into its true intellectual form.

And first, at the risk of being considered metaphysical, — though we fear no metaphysician would indorse the charge, — let us define what we mean by individuality; for the word is commonly made to signify some peculiarity or eccentricity, some unreasonable twist, of mind or disposition. An individual, then, in the sense in which we use the term, is a causative spiritual force, whose root and being are in eternity, but who lives, grows, and builds up his nature in time. All the objects of sense and thought, all facts and ideas, all things, are external to his essential personality. But he has, bound up in his personal being, sympathies and capacities which ally him with external objects, and enable him to trans-

mute their inner spirit and substance into his own personal life. The process of his growth, therefore, is a development of power from within to assimilate objects from without, the power increasing with every vital exercise of it. The result of this assimilation is character. Character is the spiritual body of the person, and represents the individualization of vital experience, the conversion of unconscious things into self-conscious men. Sir Thomas Browne, in quaint reference to the building up of our physical frame through the food we eat, declares that we have all been on our own trenchers; and so, on the same principle, our spiritual faculties can be analyzed into impersonal facts and ideas, whose life and substance we have converted into personal reason, imagination, and passion. The fundamental characteristic of man is spiritual hunger; the universe of thought and matter is spiritual food. He feeds on Nature; he feeds on ideas; he feeds, through art, science, literature, and history, on the acts and thoughts of other minds; and could we take the mightiest thinker that ever awed and controlled the world, and unravel his powers, and return their constituent particles to the multitudinous objects whence they were derived, the last probe of our analysis, after we had stripped him of all his faculties, would touch that unquenchable fiery

atom of personality which had organized round itself such a colossal body of mind, and which, in its simple naked energy, would still be capable of rehabilitating itself in the powers and passions of which it had been shorn.

It results from this doctrine of the mind's growth, that success in all the departments of life, over which intellect holds dominion, depends, not merely on an outside knowledge of the facts and laws connected with each department, but on the assimilation of that knowledge into instinctive intelligence and active power. Take the good farmer, and you will find that ideas in him are endowed with will, and can work. Take the good general, and you will find that the principles of his profession are inwrought into the substance of his nature, and act with the velocity of instincts. Take the good judge, and in him jurisprudence seems impersonated, and his opinions are authorities. Take the good merchant, and you will find that commerce, in its facts and laws, seems in him embodied, and that his sagacity appears identical with the objects on which it is exercised. Take the great statesman, take Webster, and note how, by thoroughly individualizing his comprehensive experience, he seems to carry a nation in his brain; how, in all that relates to the matter in hand, he has in him as

faculty what is out of him in *fact;* how between the man and the thing there occurs that subtile free-masonry of recognition which we call the mind's intuitive glance; and how conflicting principles and statements, mixed and mingling in fierce confusion and with deafening war-cries, fall into order and relation, and move in the direction of one inexorable controlling idea, the moment they are grasped by an intellect which is in the secret of their combination: —

"Confusion hears his voice, and the wild uproar stills."

Mark, too, how, in the productions of his mind, the presence and pressure of his whole nature, in each intellectual act, keep his opinions on the level of his character, and stamps every weighty paragraph with "Daniel Webster, his mark." The characteristic of all his great speeches is, that the statements, arguments, and images have what we should call a positive being of their own, — stand out as plainly to the sight as a ledge of rocks or chain of hills, — and, like the works of Nature herself, need no other justification of their right to exist than the fact of their existence. We may dislike their object, but we cannot deny their solidity of organization. This power of giving a substantial body, an undeniable external

shape and form, to his thoughts and perceptions, so that the toiling mind does not so much seem to pass from one sentence to another, unfolding its leading idea, as to make each sentence a solid work in a Torres-Vedras line of fortifications,—this prodigious constructive faculty, wielded with the strength of a huge Samson-like artificer in the material of mind, and welding together the substances it may not be able to fuse, puzzled all opponents who understood it not, and baffled the efforts of all who understood it well. He rarely took a position on any political question, which did not draw down upon him a whole battalion of adversaries, with ingenious array of argument and infinite noise of declamation; but after the smoke and dust and clamor of the combat were over, the speech loomed up perfect and whole, a permanent thing in history or literature, while the loud thunders of opposition had too often died away into low mutterings, audible only to the adventurous antiquary who gropes in the "still air" of stale "Congressional Debates." The rhetoric of sentences however melodious, of aphorisms however pointed, of abstractions however true, cannot stand in the storm of affairs against this true rhetoric, in which thought is consubstantiated with things.

Now in men of this stamp, who have so organized

knowledge into faculty that they have attained the power of giving Thought the character of Fact, we notice no distinction between power of intellect and power of will, but an indissoluble union and fusion of force and insight. Facts and laws are so blended with their personal being, that we can hardly decide whether it is thought that wills, or will that thinks. Their actions display the intensest intelligence; their thoughts come from them clothed in the thews and sinews of energetic volition. Their force, being proportioned to their intelligence, never issues in that wild and anarchical impulse, or that tough, obstinate, narrow wilfulness, which many take to be the characteristic of individualized power. They may, in fact, exhibit no striking individual traits which stand impertinently prominent, and yet from this very cause be all the more potent and influential individualities. Indeed, in the highest efforts of ecstatic action, when the person is mightiest, and amazes us by the giant leaps of his intuition, the mere peculiarities of his personality are unseen and unfelt. This is the case with Homer, Shakespeare, and Goethe, in poetry, — with Plato and Bacon, in philosophy, — with Newton, in science, — with Cæsar, in war. Such men doubtless had peculiarities and caprices, but they were "burnt and purged away" by the fire of their genius,

when its action was intensest. Then their whole natures were melted down into pure force and insight, and the impression they leave upon the mind is the impression of marvellous force and weight and reach of thought.

If it be objected, that these high examples are fitted to provoke despair rather than stimulate emulation, the answer is, that they contain, exemplify, and emphasize the principles,—and flash subtile hints of the processes, of all mental growth and production. How comes it that these men's thoughts radiate from them as acts, endowed not only with an illuminating, but a penetrating and animating power? The answer to this is a statement of the genesis, not merely of genius, but of every form of intellectual manhood; for such thoughts do not leap, *à la* Minerva, full-grown from the head, but are struck off in those moments when the whole nature of the thinker is alive and aglow with an inspiration kindled long before in remote recesses of consciousness from one spark of immortal fire, and unweariedly burning, burning, burning, until it lit up the whole inert mass of surrounding mind in flame.

To show, indeed, how little there is of the off-hand, the haphazard, the hit-or-miss, in the character of creative thought, and how completely the gladdest

inspiration is earned, let us glance at the psychological history of one of those imperial ideas which measure the power, test the quality, and convey the life, of the minds that conceive them. The progress of such an idea is from film to form. It has its origin in an atmosphere of feeling; for the first vital movement of the mind is emotional, and is expressed in a dim tendency, a feeble feeling after the object, or the class of objects, related to the peculiar constitution and latent affinities of its individual being. This tendency gradually condenses and deepens into a sentiment, pervading the man with a love of those objects, — by a sweet compulsion ordering his energies in their direction, — and by slow degrees investing them, through a process of imagination, with the attribute of beauty, and, through a process of reason, investing the purpose with which he pursues them with the attribute of intelligence. The object dilates as the mind assimilates and the nature moves, so that every step in this advance from mere emotion to vivid insight is a building up of the faculties which each onward movement evokes and exercises, — sentiment, imagination, reason increasing their power and enlarging their scope with each impetus that speeds them on to their bright and beckoning goal. Then, when the individual has reached his full mental stat-

ure, and come in direct contact with the object, then, only then, does he "pluck out the heart of its mystery" in one of those lightning-like *acts* of thought which we call combination, invention, discovery. There is no luck, no accident, in all this. Nature does not capriciously scatter her secrets as golden gifts to lazy pets and luxurious darlings, but imposes tasks when she presents opportunities, and uplifts him whom she would inform. The apple that she drops at the feet of Newton is but a coy invitation to follow her to the stars.

Now this living process of developing manhood and building up mind, while the person is on the trail of a definite object of intelligence, is in continual danger of being devitalized into a formal process of mere acquisition, which, though it may make students prodigies of memory, will be sure to leave them little men. Their thoughts will be the *attachés*, not the offspring, of their minds. They will have a bowing acquaintance with many truths, without being admitted to the familiarity of embracing or shaking hands with one. If they have native stamina of animal constitution, they may become men of passions and opinions, but they never will become men of sentiments and ideas; they may know the truth as it is *about* a thing, and support it with acrid and wrangling dogmatism,

but they never will know the truth as it is *in* the thing, and support it with faith and insight. And the moment they come into collision with a really live man, they will find their souls inwardly wither, and their boasted acquisitions fall away, before one glance of his irradiating intelligence and one stroke of his smiting will. If, on the contrary, they are guided by good or great sentiments, which are the souls of good or great ideas, these sentiments will be sure to organize all the capacity there is in them into positive intellectual character; but let them once divorce love from their occupations in life, and they will find that labor will degenerate into drudgery, and drudgery will weaken the power to labor, and weakness, as a last resort, will intrench itself in pretence and deception. If they are in the learned professions, they will become tricksters in law, quacks in medicine, formalists in divinity, though *regular* practitioners in all; and clients will be cheated, and patients will be poisoned, and parishioners will be — we dare not say what! — though all the colleges in the universe had showered on them their diplomas. "To be weak is miserable": Milton wrested that secret from the Devil himself! — but what shall we say of those whose weakness has subsided from misery into complacency, and who feel all the moral might of their being hour-

ly rust and decay, with the most amiable indifference and lazy content with dissolution?

Now this weakness is a mental and moral sickness, pointing the way to mental and moral death. It has its source in a violation of that law which makes the health of the mind depend on its activity being directed to an object. When directed on itself, it becomes fitful and moody; and moodiness generates morbidness, and morbidness misanthropy, and misanthropy self-contempt, and self-contempt begins the work of self-dissolution. Why, every sensible man will despise himself, if he concentrates his attention on that important personage! The joy and confidence of activity come from its being fixed and fastened on things external to itself. "The human heart," says Luther, — and we can apply the remark as well to the human mind, — "is like a millstone in a mill; when you put wheat under it, it turns, and grinds, and bruises the wheat into flour; if you put no wheat in, it still grinds on, but then it is itself it grinds, and slowly wears away." Now activity for an object, which is an activity that constantly increases the power of acting, and keeps the mind glad, fresh, vigorous, and young, has three deadly enemies, — intellectual indolence, intellectual conceit, and intellectual fear. We will say a few words on the operation of this triad of malignants.

Montaigne relates, that, while once walking in the fields, he was accosted by a beggar of Herculean frame, who solicited alms. "Are you not ashamed to beg?" said the philosopher, with a frown,—"you who are so palpably able to work?" "O, sir," was the sturdy knave's drawling rejoinder, "if you only knew how lazy I am!" Herein is the whole philosophy of idleness; and we are afraid that many a student of good natural capacity slips and slides from thought into revery, and from revery into apathy, and from apathy into incurable indisposition to think, with as much sweet unconsciousness of degradation as Montaigne's mendicant evinced; and at last hides from himself the fact of his imbecility of action, somewhat as Sir James Herring accounted for the fact that he could not rise early in the morning: he could, he said, make up his mind to it, but could not make up his body.

"He who eats with the Devil," says the proverb, "has need of a long spoon"; and he who domesticates this pleasant vice of indolence, and allows it to nestle near his will, has need of a long head. Ordinary minds may well be watchful of its insidious approaches when great ones have mourned over its enfeebling effects; and the subtle indolence that stole over the powers of Mackintosh, and gradually im-

paired the productiveness even of Goethe, may well scare intellects of less natural grasp, and imaginations of less instinctive creativeness. Every step, indeed, of the student's progress calls for energy and effort, and every step is beset by some soft temptation to abandon the task of developing power for the delight of following impulse. The appetites, for example, instead of being bitted, and bridled, and trained into passions, and sent through the intellect to quicken, sharpen, and intensify its activity, are allowed to take their way unmolested to their own objects of sense, and drag the mind down to their own sensual level. Sentiment decays, the vision fades, faith in principles departs, the moment that appetite rules. On the closing doors of that "sensual stye," as over the gate of Dante's hell, be it written: "Let those who enter here leave hope behind."

But a more refined operation of this pestilent indolence is its way of infusing into the mind the delusive belief that it can attain the objects of activity without its exercise. Under this illusion, men expect to grow wise, as men who gamble in stocks expect to grow rich, — by chance, and not by work. They invest in mediocrity in the confident hope that it will go many hundred per cent above par; and so shocking has been the inflation of the intellectual

currency of late years, that this speculation of indolence sometimes partially succeeds. But a revulsion comes, — and then brass has to make a break-neck descent to reach its proper level below gold. There are others whom indolence deludes by some trash about "fits" of inspiration, for whose Heaven-sent spasms they are humbly to wait. There is, it seems, a lucky thought somewhere in the abyss of possibility, which is somehow, at some time, to step out of essence into substance, and take up its abode in their capacious minds, — dutifully kept unoccupied in order that the expected celestial visitor may not be crowded for room. Chance is to make them king, and chance to crown them without their stir! There are others still, who, while sloth is sapping the primitive energy of their natures, expect to scale the fortresses of knowledge by leaps and not by ladders, and who count on success in such perilous gymnastics, not by the discipline of the athlete, but by the dissipation of the idler. Indolence, indeed, is never at a loss for a smooth lie or delicious sophism to justify inaction, and, in our day, has rationalized it into a philosophy of the mind, and idealized it into a school of poetry, and organized it into a "hospital of incapables." It promises you the still ecstasy of a divine repose, while it lures you surely down into the vacant dul-

ness of inglorious sloth. It provides a primrose path to stagnant pools, to an Arcadia of thistles, and a Paradise of mud.

But in a mind of any primitive power, intellectual indolence is sure to generate intellectual conceit, — a little Jack Horner, that ensconces itself in lazy heads, and, while it dwarfs every power to the level of its own littleness, keeps vociferating, "What a great man am I!" It is the essential vice of this glib imp of the mind, even when it infests large intellects, that it puts Nature in the possessive case, — labels all its inventions and discoveries "*My* truth," — and moves about the realms of art, science, and letters in a constant fear of having its pockets picked. Think of a man having vouchsafed to him one of those awful glimpses into the mysteries of creation which should be received with a shudder of prayerful joy, and taking the gracious boon with a smirk of all-satisfied conceit! One page in what Shakespeare calls "Nature's infinite book of secrecy" flies a moment open to his eager gaze, and he hears the rustling of the myriad leaves as they close and clasp, only to make his spirit more abject, his vanity more ravenous, his hatred of rivals more rancorous and mean. That grand unselfish love of truth, and joy in its discovery, by whomsoever made, which charac-

terize the true seeker and seer of science and creative art, alone can keep the mind alive and alert, alone can make the possession of truth a means of elevating and purifying the man.

But if this conceit, in powerful natures, tends to belittle character, and eat into and consume the very faculties whose successful exercise creates it, its slyly insinuated venom works swifter and deadlier on youth and inexperience. The ordinary forms of conceit, it is true, cannot well flourish in any assemblage of young men, whose plain interest it is to undeceive all self-deception and quell every insurrection of individual vanity, and who soon understand the art of burning the nonsense out of an offending brother by caustic ridicule and slow-roasting sarcasm. But there is danger of mutual deception, springing from a common belief in a false but attractive principle of culture. The mischief of intellectual conceit in our day consists in its arresting mental growth at the start by stuffing the mind with the husks of pretentious generalities, which, while they impart no vital power and convey no real information, give seeming enlargement to thought, and represent a seeming opulence of knowledge. The deluded student, who picks up these ideas in masquerade at the rag-fairs and old-clothes shops of philosophy, thinks he has the key

to all secrets and the solvent of all problems, when he really has no experimental knowledge of anything, and dwindles all the more for every juiceless, unnutritious abstraction he devours. Though famished for the lack of a morsel of the true mental food of facts and ideas, he still swaggeringly despises all relative information in his ambition to clutch at absolute truth, and accordingly goes directly to ultimates by the short cuts of cheap generalities. Why, to be sure, should he, who can, Napoleon-like, march straight on to the interior capital, submit, Marlborough-like, to the drudgery of besieging the frontier fortresses? Why should he, who can throw a girdle of generalization round the universe in less than forty minutes, stoop to master details? And this easy and sprightly amplitude of understanding, which consists not in including but in excluding all relative facts and principles, he calls comprehensiveness; the mental decrepitude it occasions he dignifies with the appellation of repose; and, on the strength of comprehensiveness and repose, he is of course qualified to take his seat beside Shakespeare, and chat cosily with Bacon, and wink knowingly at Goethe, and startle Leibnitz with a slap on the shoulder,—the true Red-Republican sign of liberty in manners, equality in power, and fraternity in ideas! These men, to be sure, have a way of saying things

which he has not yet caught; but then their wide-reaching thoughts are his as well as theirs. Imitating the condescension of some contemporary philosophers of the Infinite, he graciously accepts Christianity and patronizes the idea of Deity, though he gives you to understand that he could easily pitch a generalization outside of both. And thus, mistaking his slab-sidedness for many-sidedness, and forgetting that there is no insight without force to back it, — bedizened in conceit and magnificent in littleness, — he is thrown on society, walking in a vain show of knowledge, and doomed to be upset and trampled on by the first brawny concrete Fact he stumbles against. A true method of culture makes drudgery beautiful by presenting a vision of the object to which it leads; — beware of the conceit that dispenses with it! How much better it is to delve for a little solid knowledge, and be sure of that, than to be a proper target for such a sarcasm as a great statesman once shot at a glib advocate, who was saying nothing with great fluency and at great length! "Who," he asked, "is this self-sufficient, all-sufficient, insufficient man?"

Idleness and Conceit, however, are not more opposed to that out-springing, reverential activity which makes the person forget himself in devotion to his objects, than Fear. A bold heart in a sound head, —

that is the condition of energetic thinking, of the thought that thinks round things, and into things, and through things; but fear freezes activity at its inmost fountains. "There is nothing," says Montaigne, "that I fear so much as fear." Indeed, an educated man, who creeps along with an apologetic air, cringing to this name and ducking to that opinion, and hoping that it is not too presumptuous in him to beg the right to exist, — why, it is a spectacle piteous to gods and hateful to men! Yet think of the many knots of monitory truisms in which activity is likely to be caught and entangled at the outset, — knots which a brave purpose will not waste time to untie, but instantly cuts. First, there is the nonsense of students killing themselves by over-study, — some few instances of which, not traceable to over-eating, have shielded the shortcomings of a million idlers. Next, there is the fear that the intellect may be developed at the expense of the moral nature, — one of those truths in the abstract which are made to do the office of lies in the application, and which are calculated not so much to make good men as *goodies*, — persons rejoicing in an equal mediocrity of morals and mind, and pertinent examples of the necessity of personal force to convert moral maxims into moral might. The truth would seem to be, that half the crimes and

sufferings which history records and observation furnishes are directly traceable to want of thought rather than to bad intention; and in regard to the other half, which may be referred to the remorseless selfishness of unsanctified intelligence, has that selfishness ever had more valuable allies and tools than the mental torpor that cannot think and the conscientious stupidity that will not? Moral laws, indeed, are intellectual facts, to be investigated as well as obeyed; and it is not a blind or blear-eyed conscience, but a conscience blended with intelligence and consolidated with character, that can both see and act.

But curtly dismissing the fallacy, that the moral and spiritual faculties are likely to find a sound basis in a cowed and craven reason, we come to a form of fear that practically paralyzes independent thought more than any other, while it is incompatible with manliness and self-respect. This fear is compounded of self-distrust and that mode of vanity which cowers beneath the invective of men whose applause it neither courts nor values. If you examine critically the two raging parties of conservatism and radicalism, you will find that a goodly number of their partisans are men who have not chosen their position, but have been bullied into it, — men who see clearly enough that both parties are based on principles almost

equally true in themselves, almost equally false by being detached from their mutual relations. But then each party keeps its professors of intimidation and stainers of character, whose business it is to deprive men of the luxury of large thinking, and to drive all neutrals into their respective ranks. The missiles hurled from one side are disorganizer, infidel, disunionist, despiser of law, and other trumpery of that sort; from the other side, the no less effective ones of murderer, dumb dog, traitor to humanity, and other trumpery of that sort; and the young and sensitive student finds it difficult to keep the poise of his nature amid the cross-fire of this logic of fury and rhetoric of execration, and too often ends in joining one party from fear, or the other from the fear of being thought afraid. The probability is, that the least danger to his mental independence will proceed from any apprehension he may entertain of what are irreverently styled the "old fogies"; for if Young America goes on at its present headlong rate, there is little doubt that the old fogy will have to descend from his eminence of place, become an object of pathos rather than terror, and be compelled to make the inquiring appeal to his brisk hunters, so often made to himself in vain, "Am I not a man and a brother?" But, with whatever association, political

or moral, the thinker may connect himself, let him *go* in, and not be dragged in or scared in. He certainly can do no good to himself, his country, or his race by being the slave and echo of the heads of a clique. Besides, as most organizations are constituted on the principles of a sort of literary socialism, and each member lives and trades on a common capital of phrases, there is danger that these phrases may decline from signs into substitutes of thought, and both intellect and character evaporate in words. Thus, a man may be a Union man and a National man, or an Anti-Slavery man and a Temperance man and a Woman's-Rights man, and still be very little of a man. There is, indeed, no more ludicrous sight than to see Mediocrity, perched on one of these resounding adjectives, strut and bluster, and give itself braggadocio airs, and dictate to all quiet men its maxims of patriotism or morality, and all the while be but a living illustration through what grandeurs of opinion essential meanness and poverty of soul will peer and peep and be disclosed. To be a statesman or reformer requires a courage that dares defy dictation from any quarter, and a mind which has come in direct contact with the great inspiring ideas of country and humanity. All the rest is spite, and spleen, and cant, and conceit, and words.

It is plain, of course, that every man of large and living thought will naturally sympathize with those great social movements, informing and reforming, which are the glory of the age; but it must always be remembered that the grand and generous sentiments that underlie those movements demand in their fervid disciple a corresponding grandeur and generosity of soul. There is no reason why his philanthropy should be malignant because other men's conservatism may be stupid; and the vulgar insensibility to the rights of the oppressed, and the vulgar scorn of the claims of the wretched, which men calling themselves respectable and educated may oppose to his own warmer feelings and nobler principles, should be met, not with that invective which may be as vulgar as the narrowness it denounces, nor always with that indignation which is righteous as well as wrathful, but with that awful contempt with which Magnanimity shames meanness, simply by the irony of her lofty example and the sarcasm of her terrible silence.

In these remarks, which we trust our readers have at least been kind enough to consider worthy of an effort of patience, we have attempted to connect all genuine intellectual success with manliness of character; have endeavored to show that force of individ-

ual being is its primary condition; that this force is augmented and enriched, or weakened and impoverished, according as it is or is not directed to appropriate objects; that indolence, conceit and fear present continual checks to this going out of the mind into glad and invigorating communion with facts and laws; and that as a man is not a mere bundle of faculties, but a vital person, whose unity pervades, vivifies, and creates all the varieties of his manifestation, the same vices which enfeeble and deprave character tend to enfeeble and deprave intellect. But perhaps we have not sufficiently indicated a diseased state of consciousness, from which most intellectual men have suffered, many have died, and all should be warned, — the disease, namely, of mental disgust, the sign and the result of mental debility. Mental disgust "sicklies o'er" all the objects of thought, extinguishes faith in exertion, communicates a dull wretchedness to indolence in the very process by which it makes activity impossible, and drags into its own slough of despond, and discolors with its own morbid reveries, the objects which it should ardently seek and genially assimilate. It sees things neither as they are, nor as they are glorified and transfigured by hope and health and faith; but, in the apathy of that idling introspection which betrays a genius for

misery, it pronounces effort to be vanity, and despairingly dismisses knowledge as delusion. "Despair," says Donne, "is the damp of hell; rejoicing is the serenity of heaven."

Now contrast this mental disgust, which proceeds from mental debility, with the sunny and soul-lifting exhilaration radiated from mental vigor, — a vigor which comes from the mind's secret consciousness that it is in contact with moral and spiritual verities, and is partaking of the rapture of their immortal life. A spirit earnest, hopeful, energetic, inquisitive, making its mistakes minister to wisdom, and converting the obstacles it vanquishes into power, — a spirit inspired by a love of the excellency and beauty of knowledge, which will not let it sleep, — such a spirit soon learns that the soul of joy is hid in the austere form of Duty, and that the intellect becomes brighter, keener, clearer, more buoyant, and more efficient, as it feels the freshening vigor infused by her monitions and menaces, and the celestial calm imparted by her soul-satisfying smile. In all the professions and occupations over which Intellect holds dominion, the student will find that there is no grace of character without its corresponding grace of mind. He will find that virtue is an aid to insight; that good and sweet affections will bear a harvest of pure and high

thoughts; that patience will make the intellect persistent in plans which benevolence will make beneficent in results; that the austerities of conscience will dictate precision to statements and exactness to arguments; that the same moral sentiments and moral power which regulate the conduct of life will illumine the path and stimulate the purpose of those daring spirits eager to add to the discoveries of truth and the creations of art. And he will also find that this purifying interaction of spiritual and mental forces will give the mind an abiding foundation of joy for its starts of rapture and flights of ecstasy; — a joy in whose light and warmth, languor and discontent and depression and despair will be charmed away; — a joy, which will make the mind large, generous, hopeful, aspiring, in order to make life beautiful and sweet; — a joy, in the words of an old divine, "which will put on a more glorious garment above, and be joy superinvested in glory!"

IV.

HEROIC CHARACTER.

THE noblest and most exhilarating objects of human contemplation are those which exhibit human nature in its exalted aspects. Our hearts instinctively throb and burn in sympathy with grand thoughts and brave actions radiated from great characters; for they give palpable form to ideals of conduct domesticated in all healthy imaginations, and fulfil prophecies uttered in the depths of all aspiring souls. They *are*, in fact, what all men feel they *ought* to be. They inspire our weakness by the energy of their strength; they sting our pride by the irony of their elevation. Their flights of thought and audacities of action, which so provokingly mock our wise saws and proper ways, and which seem to cast ominous conjecture on the sanity of their minds, cannot blind us to the fact that it is we and not they who are unnatural; that nature, obstructed in common men, twisted into unnatural distortions, and only now and then stuttering into ideas, comes out in them freely,

harmoniously, sublimely, all hinderances burnt away by the hot human heart and flaming human soul which glow unconsumed within them. They are, indeed, so filled with the wine of life, so charged with the electricity of mind, — they have, in Fletcher's fine extravagance, "so much man thrust into them," — that manhood must force its way out, and demonstrate its innate grandeur and power.

This indestructible manhood, which thus makes for itself a clear and clean path through all impediments, is commonly called Heroism, or genius in action, — genius that creatively clothes its ascending thoughts in tough thews and sinews, uplifts character to the level of ideas, and impassionates soaring imagination into settled purpose. The hero, therefore, with his intelligence all condensed into will, — compelled to think in deeds, and find his language in events, — his creative energy spending itself, not in making epics, but in making history, — and who thus brings his own fiery nature into immediate, invigorating contact with the nature of others, without the mediation of the mist of words, — is, of course, the object both of heartier love and of fiercer hatred than those men of genius whose threatening thought is removed to the safe ideal distance of Art. The mean-minded, the little-hearted, and the pusillanimous of soul in-

stinctively recognize him as their personal enemy; are scared and cowed by the swift sweep of his daring will, and wither inwardly as they feel the ominous glance of his accusing eyes; and they accordingly intrench themselves and their kind in economic maxims and small bits of detraction, in sneers, suspicions, cavils, scandals, in all the defences by which malice and stupidity shut out from themselves, and strive to shut out from others, the light that streams from a great and emancipating nature. We must clear away all this brushwood and undergrowth before the hero can be seen in his full proportions; and this will compel us to sacrifice remorselessly to him that type of human character which goes under the name of the Sneak.

The fundamental peculiarity of this antithesis and antagonist of the hero is his tendency to skulk and evade the requirements of every generous, kindling, and exalting sentiment which the human heart contains. He has, to be sure, a feeble glimmer of thought, a hesitating movement of conscience, a sickly perception that he exists as a soul, and his claim to be considered a man must therefore be reluctantly admitted; but his soul is so puny, so famine-wasted by fasting from the soul's appropriate diet, that he knows of its existence only as an invalid knows of

the existence of his stomach, — by its qualms. This soul, however, is still essentially the soul of a sneak, and its chief office appears to be to give malignity to his littleness, by weakly urging him to hate all who have more. This rancor of his has an inexpressible felicity of meanness, which analysis toils after in vain. His patriotism, his morality, his religion, his philanthropy, if he pretend to have any of these fine things, are all infected with it, lose their nature in its presence, and dwindle into petty tributaries of its snarling venom and spleen. It is compounded of envy, fear, folly, obstinacy, malice, — all of them bad qualities, but so modified in him by the extreme limitation of his conceptions and the utter poltroonery of his character, that we may well hesitate to call them bad. He is, indeed, too small a creature to reach even the elevation of vice; and no general term designating a sin can be applied to him without doing injustice to the dignity of evil and the respectabilities of the Satanic.

Mean as this poisonous bit of humanity is, he still wields a wide influence over opinion by creeping stealthily into the recesses of other and larger minds, and using their powers to give currency to his sentiments. He thus dictates no inconsiderable portion of the biography, criticism, history, politics, and belles-lettres in general circulation; and, by a cunning

misuse of the words *prudence* and *practical wisdom*, impudently teaches that disinterestedness is selfishness in disguise, poetry a sham, heroism craft or insanity, religion a convenient lie, and human life a cultivated bog. We detect his venomous spirit in all those eminent men whose abilities are exercised to degrade man and wither up the springs of generous action. Thus Dean Swift, in his description of the Yahoos, combines the sentiment of the sneak with the faculty of the satirist; Rochefoucauld, in his "Maxims," the sentiment of the sneak combined with the faculty of the philosopher; and Voltaire, in his "Pucelle," presents a more hideous combination still of sneak and poet.

Having thus ruled out the evidence of this caricature and caricaturist of humanity against the reality of the heroic element in man, we may now proceed to its analysis and description. And first, it is necessary to state that all vital ideas and purposes have their beginning in sentiments. Sentiment is the living principle, the soul, of thought and volition, determining the direction, giving the impetus, and constituting the force, of faculties. Heroism is no extempore work of transient impulse, — a rocket rushing fretfully up to disturb the darkness by which, after a moment's insulting radiance, it is ruthlessly

swallowed up, — but a steady fire, which darts forth tongues of flame. It is no sparkling epigram of action, but a luminous epic of character. It first appears in the mind as a mysterious but potent sentiment, working below consciousness in the unsounded depths of individual being, and giving the nature it inhabits a slow, sure, upward tendency to the noble and exalted in meditation and action. Growing with the celestial nutriment on which it feeds, and gaining strength as it grows, it gradually condenses into conscious sentiment. This sentiment then takes the form of intelligence in productive ideas, and the form of organization in heroic character; so that, at the end, heart, intellect, and will are all kindled in one blaze, all united in one individuality, and all gush out in one purpose. The person thus becomes a living soul, thinking and acting with the rapidity of one who feels spiritual existence, with the audacity of one who obeys spiritual instincts, and with the intelligence of one who discerns spiritual laws. There is no break or flaw in the connection between the various parts of his nature, but a vital unity, in which intellect seems to have the force of will, and will the insight and foresight of intellect. There is no hesitation, no stopping half-way, in the pursuit of his lofty aim, partly because, his elevation being the elevation of

nature, he is not perched on a dizzy peak of thought, but is established on a table-land of character, and partly because there plays round the object he seeks a light and radiance of such strange, unearthly lustre, that his heart, smitten with love for its awful beauty, is drawn toward it by an irresistible fascination. Disappointment, discouragement, obstacles, drudgery, only sting his energies by opposition or are glorified to his imagination as steps; for beyond them and through them is the Celestial City of his hopes, shining clear to the inner eye of his mind, tempting, enticing, urging him on through all impediments, by the sweet, attractive force of its visionary charm! The eyes of such men, by the testimony of painters, always have the expression of looking into distant space. As a result of this unwearied spiritual energy and this ecstatic spiritual vision is the courage of the hero. He has no fear of death, because the idea of death is lost in his intense consciousness of life, — full, rich, exulting, joyous, lyrical life, — which ever asserts the immortality of mind, because it feels itself immortal, and is scornfully indifferent to that drowsy twilight of intellect into which atheism sends its unsubstantial spectres, and in which the whole flock of fears, terrors, despairs, weaknesses, and doubts scatter their enfeebling maxims of misanthropy, and

insinuate their ghastly temptations to suicide. One ray from a sunlike soul drives them gibbering back to their parent darkness; for

> "Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
> No life that breathes with human breath
> Hath ever truly wished for death.
>
> "'T is life of which our nerves are scant,
> O life, — not death, — for which we pant,
> More life, and fuller, that we want!"

This life of the soul, which is both light and heat, intelligence and power, — this swift-ascending instinct of the spirit to spiritual ideas and laws, — this bold committal of self to something it values more than all the interests of self, — attests the presence of the heroic element by indicating an ideal standard of conduct. Let us now contemplate it in the scale of moral precedence, according as it fastens its upward glance on the idea of glory, or country, or humanity, or heaven. This will lead to a short consideration of the hero as a soldier, as a patriot, as a reformer, and as a saint.

In viewing the hero as a soldier, it must be remembered that the first great difficulty in human life is to rouse men from the abject dominion of selfishness, laziness, sensuality, fear, and other forms of physical existence but spiritual death. Fear is

the paralysis of the soul; and nature, preferring anarchy to imbecility, lets loose the aggressive passions to shake it off. Hence war, which is a rude protest of manhood against combining order with slavery, and repose with degradation. As long as it is a passion, it merely illustrates nature's favorite game of fighting one vice with another; but in noble natures the passion becomes consecrated by the heart and imagination, acknowledges an ideal aim, and, under the inspiration of the sentiment of honor, inflames the whole man with a love of the dazzling idea of glory. It is this heroic element in war which palliates its enormities, humanizes its horrors, and proves the combatants to be men, and not tigers and wolves. Its grand illusions — fopperies to the philosopher and vices to the moralist — are realities to the hero. Glory feeds his heart's hunger for immortality, gives him a beautiful disdain of fear, puts ecstasy into his courage and claps wings to his aspirations, and makes the grim battle-field, with its crash of opposing hosts and the deafening din of its engines of death, as sweet to him

> "As ditties highly penned,
> Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bower,
> With ravishing division, to her lute."

This splendid fanaticism, while it has infected such

fine and pure spirits as Bayard and Sir Philip Sidney, and thus allied itself with exalted virtues, has not altogether denied its hallowing light to men stained with Satanic vices. In Hannibal, in Cæsar, in Wallenstein, in Napoleon, in all commanders of gigantic abilities as well as heroic sentiments, and whose designs stretch over an extended field of operations, the idea of glory dilates to the vastness of their desires, and is pursued with a ruthlessness of intellect which, unchecked by moral principle, is indifferent to all considerations of truth and humanity which block the way to success. The ravenous hunger for universal dominion which characterizes such colossal spirits, though criminal, is still essentially ideal, and takes hold of what is immortal in evil. Such men are the unhallowed poets and artists of action, fiercely impatient to shape the world into the form of their imperious conceptions, — like the usurping god of the old Greek mythology, who devoured all existing natures, and swallowed all the pre-existing elements of things, and then produced the world anew after the pattern of his own tyrannous ideas. But their crimes partake of the greatness of their characters, and cannot be imitated by malefactors of a lower grade.

The courage of the devotee of glory has in it an

element of rapture which resembles the fine frenzy of the poet. The hero, indeed, has such prodigious energy and fulness of soul, possesses so quick, keen, and burning a sense of life, that when great perils call for almost superhuman efforts, he exhibits flashes of valor which transcend all bodily limitations; for he feels, in the fury and delirium of imaginative ecstasy, as if his body were all ensouled, and, though riddled with bullets, would not consent to death. It was this sense which made Cæsar rush singly on the Spanish ranks, and carried Napoleon across the Bridge of Lodi. "I saw him," says Demosthenes, in speaking of Philip of Macedon, "though covered with wounds, his eye struck out, his collar-bone broke, maimed, both in his hands and feet, still resolutely rush into the midst of dangers, and ready to deliver up to Fortune any part of his body she might desire, provided he might live honorably and gloriously with the rest." It was this sense also that forced out of the cold heart of Robespierre the only heroic utterance of his life. In his last struggle in the Convention, surrounded by enemies eager for his blood, and his endeavors to speak in his own defence drowned by the clamors of the assembly, desperation infused eloquence even into him, and he cried out, in a voice heard above everything else, "President of Assassins! hear me!"

The hero, also, when his inspiration is a thought, has a kind of faith that the blind messengers of death hurtling round him will respect him who represents in his person the majesty of an idea. "The ball that is to hit me," said Napoleon, "has not yet been cast"; and this confidence of great generals in a tacit understanding between them and the bullets was quaintly expressed by the brave Dessaix in the presentiment of death which came over him on the morning of the battle of Marengo. "It is a long time," he said to one of his aides-de-camp, "since I have fought in Europe. The bullets won't know me again. Something will happen."

The audacity and energy of the hero likewise stimulate his intelligence, brightening and condensing rather than confusing his mind. The alertness, sagacity, and coolness of his thinking are never more apparent than in the frenzy of conflict. At the terrible naval battle of the Baltic, Nelson, after the engagement had lasted four hours, found that an armistice was necessary to save his fleet from destruction, and, in the heat and din of the cannonade, wrote a letter to the Crown Prince of Denmark proposing one. Not a minute was to be lost, and an officer hastily handed him a wafer to seal it. But Nelson called for a candle, and deliberately sealed it in wax.

"This is no time," he said, "to appear hurried and informal." Gonsalvo, the great captain, in one of his Italian battles, had his powder magazine blown up by the enemy's first discharge. His soldiers, smitten by sudden panic, paused and turned, but he instantly rallied them with the exclamation, "My brave boys, the victory is ours! Heaven tells us by this signal that we shall have no further need of our artillery." Napoleon was famous for combining daring with shrewdness, and was politic even in his fits of rage. In desperate circumstances he put on an air of reckless confidence, which cowed the spirits of his adversaries, and almost made them disbelieve the evidence of their senses. Thus he induced the Austrian ambassador to commit the folly of signing the treaty of Campo Formio, by a furious threat of instant war, which, if declared at that time, would probably have resulted to Austria's advantage. Seizing a precious vase of porcelain, a gift to the ambassador from the Empress Catherine, he exclaimed passionately, "The die is then cast; the truce broken; war declared. But mark my words! before the end of autumn I will break in pieces your monarchy as I now destroy this porcelain"; and, dashing it into fragments, he bowed and retired. The treaty was signed the next day.

But perhaps the grandest example in modern his-

tory of that audacity which combines all the physical, civic, and mental elements of courage is found in Napoleon's return from Elba, and triumphant progress to Paris. The world then beheld the whole organization of a monarchy melt away like a piece of frost-work in the sun, before a person and a name. Every incident in that march is an epical stroke. He throws himself unhesitatingly on the Napoleon in every man and mass of men he meets, and Napoleonism instinctively recognizes and obeys its master. On approaching the regiment at Grenoble, the officers in command gave the order to fire. Advancing confidently, within ten steps of the levelled muskets, and baring his breast, he uttered the well-known words, "Soldiers of the Fifth Regiment, if there is one among you who would kill his Emperor, let him do it! here I am!" The whole march was worthy such a commencement, profound as intelligence, irresistible as destiny.

But the test of ascension in heroism is not found in faculty, but in the sentiment which directs the faculty; the love of glory, therefore, must yield the palm in disinterestedness of sentiment to the love of country, and the hero as a patriot take precedence of the hero as a soldier.

The great conservative instinct of patriotism is in

all vigorous communities, and under its impulse whole nations sometimes become heroic. Even its prejudices are elements of spiritual strength, and most of the philosophic chatterers who pretend to be above them are, in reality, below them. Thus the old Hollander, who piously attempted to prove that Dutch was the language spoken by Adam in Paradise, and the poor Ethiopians, who believed that God made their sands and deserts in person, and contemptuously left the rest of the world to be manufactured by his angels, were in a more hopeful condition of manhood than is the cosmopolitan coxcomb, who, from the elevation of a mustache and the comprehensiveness of an imperial, lisps elegant disdain of all narrow national peculiarities. The great drawback on half the liberality of the world is its too frequent connection with indifference or feebleness. When we apply to men the tests of character, we often find that the amiable gentleman, who is so blandly superior to the prejudices of sect and country, and who clasps the whole world in the mild embrace of his commonplaces, becomes a furious bigot when the subject-matter rises to the importance of one-and-sixpence, and the practical question is whether he or you shall pay it. The revenge of the little in soul and the weak in will is to apply to the strong

in character the tests of criticism; and then your unmistakable do-nothing can prattle prettily in the *patois* of the giants, and, with a few abstract maxims, that any boy can grasp, will smirkingly exhibit to you the limitations in thought of such poor creatures as Miltiades, Leonidas, Fabius, Scipio, of Wallace, Bruce, Tell, Hofer, of Joan of Arc, Henry IV., Turgot, Lafayette, of De Witt and William of Orange, of Grattan, Curran, and Emmett, of Pym, Hampden, Russell, Sidney, Marvell, of Washington, Adams, Henry, Hamilton, and all the rest of the heroes of patriotism. The idea these men represent may, doubtless, be easily translated into a truism, and this truism be easily overtopped by some truism more general; but their faith, fortitude, self-devotion, their impassioned, all-absorbing love of country, are, unhappily, in the nature of paradoxes.

Patriotism, indeed, when it rises to the heroic standard, is a positive *love* of country, and it will do all and sacrifice all which it is in the nature of love to do and to sacrifice for its object. It is heroic only when it is lifted to the elevation of the ideal, — when it is so hallowed by the affections and glorified by the imagination that the whole being of the man is thrilled and moved by its inspiration, and drudgery becomes beautiful, and suffering noble, and death

sweet, in the country's service. No mere intelligent regard for a nation's material interests, or pride in its extended dominion, is sufficient to constitute a patriot hero. It is the sentiment and the idea of the country, "felt in his blood and felt along his heart"; it is this which withdraws him from self, and identifies him with the nation; which enlarges his personality to the grandeur and greatness of the national personality; which makes national thoughts and national passions beat and burn in his own heart and brain, until at last he feels every wrong done to his country as a personal wrong, and every wrong committed by his country as a sin for which he is personally responsible. Such men are nations individualized. They establish magnetic relations with what is latent in all classes, command all the signs of that subtle freemasonry which brings men into instant communion with the people, and are ever impatient and dangerous forces in a nation until they reach their rightful, predestined position at its head. "As in nature," says Bacon, "things move more violently to their place and calmly in their place, so virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and calm." As long as Chatham is out of office, England must be torn with factions, in his furious endeavors to upset the pretenders to statesmanship who

occupy the official stations; but, the moment he is minister, the nation comes to self-consciousness in him, and acts with the promptitude, energy, and unity of a great power. Though his body was shattered and worn with illness, his spirit — the true spirit of the nation — was felt at once in every department of the public service; timidity, hesitation, intrigue, mediocrity, disappeared before his audacious intelligence; and India, America, the continent of Europe, soon felt the full force of the latent energies of the national soul. The word *impossible* was hateful to Chatham, as it is to all vigorous natures who recognize the latent, the reserved power, in men and nations. "Never let me hear that foolish word again," said Mirabeau. "Impossible! — it is not good French," said Napoleon. My Lord Anson, at the Admiralty, sends word to Chatham, then confined to his chamber by one of his most violent attacks of the gout, that it is impossible for him to fit out a naval expedition within the period to which he is limited. "Impossible!" cried Chatham, glaring at the messenger; "who talks to me of impossibilities?" Then starting to his feet, and forcing out great drops of agony on his brow with the excruciating torment of the effort, he exclaimed, "Tell Lord Anson that he serves under a minister who treads on impossibilities!" One of his

contemporaries calls all this ranting. "Lord Chatham's rants," he says, "are amazing." But a statesman who indulged in such fine rants as Quebec and Minden, who ranted France out of Germany, America, and India, and ranted England into a power of the first class, is a ranter infinitely to be preferred to those cool and tasteful politicians who ruin the countries they govern with so much decorous duncery and grave and dignified feebleness.

Patriotism, to the patriot hero, does not consist in aiding the government of his country in every base or stupid act it may perform, but rather in paralyzing its power when it violates vested rights, affronts instituted justice, and assumes undelegated authority. Accordingly, Chatham, the type of the patriot, but whose patriotism comprehended the whole British empire, put forth the full force and frenzy of his genius and passions against the administrations who taxed America; gloried, as an English patriot, in the armed resistance of the Colonies; gave them the material aid and comfort of his splendid fame and overwhelming eloquence; became, in the opinion of all little-minded patriots, among whom was King George the Third himself, a trumpet of sedition, an enemy to his country; and, with the grand audacity of his character, organized an opposition, so strong in rea-

son and moral power, and so uncompromising in its attitude, that it at least enfeebled the efforts of the governments it could not overturn, and made Lord North more than once humorously execrate the memory of Columbus for discovering a continent which gave him and his ministry so much trouble. Fox and Burke, as well as Chatham, viewed the Americans as English subjects struggling for English legal privileges; they would not admit, even after the Colonists had revolted, that they were rebels; and Lord North was near the truth, when, interrupted by Fox for using the offensive word, he mockingly corrected himself, and with an arch look at the Whig benches, called the American army and generals, not rebels, but "gentlemen of the Opposition over the water." In after years, when Fox and Burke had quarrelled, Fox, referring, in the House of Commons, to old memories of their political friendship, alluded to the time when they had mutually wept over the fall of Montgomery, and mutually rejoiced over a victory by Washington; and one of the noblest passages in literature is the memorable sentence with which Burke concludes his address to the electors of Bristol, in defence of his conduct in regard to the American war and the government of Ireland. It just indicates that delicate line which separates, in great and generous natures, the

highest love of country from the still higher love of mankind. "The charges against me," he says, "are all of one kind, — that I have carried the principles of general justice and benevolence too far, — further than a cautious policy would warrant, — further than the opinions of many could go along with me. In every accident which may happen to me through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, in distress, — I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted."

It is a great advance, morally and mentally, when a man's heart and brain reach out beyond the sphere of his personal interests to comprehend the nation to which he belongs; but there are men whose ascending and widening natures refuse to be limited even by the sentiment and idea of country, whose raised conceptions grasp the beauty of beneficence, the grandeur of truth, the majesty of right, and who, in the service of these commanding ideas, are ready to suffer all, in the spirit of that patience which St. Pierre finely calls the "courage of virtue," and to dare all, in the spirit of that self-devotion which is certainly the virtue of courage. This class includes all reformers in society, in government, in philosophy, in religion, whose position calls for heroic acts, resolutions, sacrifices, — for manhood as well as for mental power. Thus Milton, whose whole nature was cast in an heroic

mould, who felt himself not merely the countryman of Shakespeare and Cromwell, but of Homer and Sophocles, of Dante and Tasso, of Luther and Melancthon, — of all men who acknowledge the sway of the beautiful, the noble, and the right, — could not, of course, write anything which was not dictated by an heroic spirit; all his sentences, therefore, have the animating and penetrating, as well as illuminating power of heroic acts, and always imply a character strong enough to make good his words. Still, in some respects, we may doubt whether the mere writing his "Defence of the People of England," rises to the dignity of heroism; but, when his physician told him that if he did write it he would lose his eyesight, his calm persistence in his work was sublimely heroic. Freedom demanded of the student his most precious sense, and he resolutely plucked out his eyes, and laid them on her altar, content to abide in outward night, provided with the inner eye of the soul he could see the stern countenance of inexorable Duty melt into that approving smile which rewards self-sacrifice with a bliss deeper than all joys of sense or raptures of imagination.

There are occasions, also, where mere intellectual hardihood may be in the highest degree heroic. That peculiar moral fear which is involved in intellectual

timidity is often harder to overcome than the physical fear of the stake and the rack. There are men who will dare death for glory or for country, who could not dare scorn or contumely for the truth; and people generally would rather die than think. Nothing but that enrapturing sentiment and vivid vision implied in the *love* of truth, nothing but that transporting thrill which imparadises the soul in the perception of a new thought, can lift a wise and good man above the wholesome prejudices of prudence, custom, country, and common belief, and make him let loose the immortal idea his mind imprisons, and send it forth to war against false systems and tenacious errors, with the firm faith that it will result in eventual good, though at first it seems to trail along with it the pernicious consequences of a lie. Such a man feels the awful responsibility laid upon that soul into whose consciousness descends one of those revolutionizing truths,

> "Hard to shape in act:
> For all the past of time reveals
> A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
> Wherever thought has wedded fact."

Thus heroic resolution, as well as wide-reaching thought, is often indispensable to the philosophic thinker; but when to the deep love of truth is added

the deeper love of right, and the thinker stands boldly forth as a practical reformer, the obstacles, internal and external, to brave and determined effort are multiplied both to his conscience and his will. A prophet of the future, with his eager eyes fixed on hope, —

> "The burning eagle,
> Above the unrisen morrow," —

he has to labor in the present on men whose inspiration is memory. The creative and beneficent character of his aggressive thought is at first concealed by its destructive aspect. His light seems lightning, which irradiates not to bless, but to smite. As regards his own life and comfort, he may be ready, in every exigency, to say, with the hero of Italy, "I had rather take one step forward and die, than one step backward and live"; but he often has also to resist the tormenting thought that he is sacrificing himself only to injure others, and is preparing to go triumphantly through the earthly hell of the martyr's stake, only to pass into that hotter hell which is paved with good intentions. A universal yell denounces him as the apostle of anarchy, falsehood, and irreligion; and nothing but the faith which discerns and takes hold of the immortal substance of truth can enable him, not only to withstand this shock of adverse opinion,

but to deal his prodigious blows with the condensed energy of unhesitating, unweakened will. This is true strength and fortitude of soul, reposing grandly on unseen realities above it, and obstinately resisting the evidence of the shifting facts which appear to cast doubt on the permanent law. It is probable that Wickliffe, Huss, Luther, all heroic men who have brought down fire from heaven, the light and the heat of truth, had, in moments of despondency, a sly and sneering devil at their elbow, mocking them with the taunt by which the scoffing messenger of Jove adds keener agony to the sufferings of the chained Prometheus: —

> "Those who do endure
> Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
> Thousand-fold torment on themselves and *him*."

In these remarks, so far, we have laid stress on the principle that the inspiration of the hero is the positive quality of love, not the negative quality of hatred. For example, Carlyle, always writing of heroism, is rarely heroic, because he hates falsehood rather than loves truth, and is a disorganizer of wrong rather than an organizer of right. His writings tend to split the mind into a kind of splendid disorder, and we purchase some shining fragments of thought at the expense of weakened will. Being

negative, he cannot communicate life and inspiration to others; for negation ends in despair, and love alone can communicate the life of hope. His negative thought, therefore, can never become a positive thing; it can pout, sneer, gibe, growl, hate, declaim, destroy; but it cannot cheer, it cannot create. Now men may be soldiers, patriots, and reformers, from the inspiration of hatred; but they cannot be heroic. It is love, and love alone, whose sweet might liberates men from the thraldom of personal considerations, and lifts them into the exhilarating region of unselfish activity. It is not the fear of shame, but love of glory, which makes the purely heroic soldier. It is not hatred of other nations, but love of his own, which makes the heroic patriot. It is not hatred of falsehood and wrong, but love of truth and right, which makes the heroic thinker and reformer. And it is not the fear of hell and hatred of the Devil, but the love of heaven, which makes the heroic saint. All the hatred, all the fear, are incidental and accidental, not central and positive. We should hardly style old King Clovis a saint on the strength of the passion he flew into when the account of the Crucifixion was read to him, and of his fierce exclamation, "I would I had been there with my valiant Franks! I would have redressed his wrongs!"

The heroism of the saint, the last to be considered here, exceeds all other heroism in depth, intensity, comprehensiveness, elevation, and wisdom. The hero soldier, the hero patriot, the hero reformer, each is great by detaching one idea from the sum of things, and throwing his whole energies into its realization; but the hero saint views all things in relation to their centre and source. He brings in the idea of God, and at once the highest earthly objects swiftly recede to their proper distance, and dwindle to their real dimensions. But this heroism, though it exhibits human nature reposing on an all-inclusive idea, the mightiest that the heart can conceive or the mind dimly grope for on the vanishing edges of intelligence, is still not a heroism eagerly coveted or warmly approved. It is recorded of Saint Theresa, that, after she had become old and poor in the service of the Lord, and had only two sous left of all her possessions, she sat down to meditate. "Theresa and two sous," she said, "are nothing; but Theresa, two sous, and God, are all things"; on which Pierre Leroux makes the bitter comment: "To the young bucks of Paris, Theresa, young and handsome, and worth but two sous, would be little; and Theresa, two sous, and God, would be still less!"

The mental phenomena implied in the acts, or re-

corded in the writings, of the heroes of religion are of so grand and transcendent a character that one can hardly have patience with Mr. Worldly Wiseman, — the worthy gentleman who writes history and explains the problems of metaphysics, — when, with his knowing look, he disposes of the whole matter by some trash about fanaticism and disordered imagination. Now glory, country, humanity, are realities only to those who love them; and the all-comprehending Reality the saint seeks and adores, is but a faint star,

"Pinnacled dim in the intense inane,"

to the wisest of the worldlings. By what right does he sit in critical judgment on the saints and martyrs, when his point of view is earth, and their point of view is heaven? Religious heroism, indeed, in its gradual growth from religious sentiment, is a feeling before it is an idea; but what the heart wishes the mind soon discerns; and the marvellous experiences which visit the consciousness of the saint are logical results of the gravitation of his nature to its source, and are as valid as other facts of immediate perception. Once roused, this divinizing sentiment kindles the whole solid mass of his being with its penetrating and purifying fire; carries his thoughts, affections, passions, to higher levels of character;

converts faith into sight, so that at last the mysteries of the supernatural world are partially unrolled to his eager gaze; he catches glimpses of glories almost too bright for the aching sense to bear; discerns right, truth, beneficence, justice, as radiations from one awful loveliness; and sees

> "Around His throne the sanctities of heaven
> Stand thick as stars; and from His sight receive
> Beatitude past utterance."

Filled and stirred with these wondrous visions,

> "Which o'erinform his tenement of clay,"

he becomes a soldier of the chivalry of spirit, a patriot of the heavenly kingdom, — the true "pilgrim of eternity," burdened beneath the weight of his rapture until it finds expression in those electric deeds whose shock is felt all over the earth, amazing Time itself with a thrill from Eternity. The still, deep ecstasy which imparadises his spirit can but imperfectly ally itself with human language, though it occasionally escapes along his written page in fitful gleams of celestial lightning. touching such words as "joy," and "sweetness," and "rest," with an unearthly significance, a preternatural intensity of meaning; but the full power of this awful beauty of holiness is only seen and felt in the virtues it creates;

in the felicity with which it transmutes calamities into occasions for the exercise of new graces of character; in the sureness of its glance into the occult secrets of life; in the solid patience which exhausts all the ingenuity of persecution; in the intrepid meekness which is victorious over the despotic might of unhallowed force; in the serene audacity which dares all the principalities of earth, and defies all the powers of hell; in the triumphant Faith which hears the choral chant amidst the torments of the rack, and sees the cherubic faces through the glare of the fires of martyrdom!

But perhaps there is nothing more exquisitely simple and touching in the experience of the hero of religion, nothing which more startles us by its confident faith, than the feeling which animates his colloquies and meditations when the spiritual home-sickness, the pang of what Coleridge calls the sentiment of "other worldliness," presses on his soul, and he confesses to the weakness of desiring to depart. Thus figure to yourselves Luther, as he is revealed to us in his old age, sitting by the rude table in his humble house, and, with a few dear veterans of the Reformation, gossiping over the mugs of ale on the affairs of the celestial kingdom, while the thunders of papal and imperial wrath are heard muttering

ominously in the distance. Luther tells them that he begins to feel the longing to leave their camp on earth, and to go home. He is not without hope that the Lord, in view of his protracted struggles and declining energies, will soon recall him. He is resigned, not to die, but to live, if such be the order from head-quarters; but if it be not presumptuous in him to proffer a petition, he could wish it to be considered that he had sojourned here long enough, and should have permission to depart, it mattering little to him whether the medium of transfer from one world to another be the bed of sickness or the martyr's stake. At any rate, however, age is doing its sure work even on his stalwart frame; and he closes with the consoling sentiment so finely embodied by the Christian poet:

> "Within this body pent,
> Absent from Thee I roam:
> But nightly pitch my moving tent
> A day's march nearer home."

We have thus attempted to picture, with a few rude scrawls of the pencil, the heroic spirit, as its creative glow successively animates the soldier, the patriot, the reformer, and the saint, painfully conscious all the while that we have not sounded its depth of sentiment, nor measured its height of char-

acter, nor told its fulness of joy. We have seen that this spirit is a spirit of cheer, and love, and beauty, and power, giving the human soul its finest and amplest expression; and that, while its glorious inspiration illuminates history with the splendors of romance, it is the prolific source, in humble life, of heroic deeds which no history records, no poetry celebrates, and of which renown is mute. This spirit is everywhere, and it is needed everywhere. It is needed to resist low views of business, low views of politics, low views of patriotism, low views of life. It is needed in every situation where passion tempts, sloth enfeebles, fear degrades, power threatens, and interest deludes. And it is not without its band of witnesses to sound their everlasting protest against meanness, cowardice, baseness, and fraud, and to shield in their sustaining arms, and invigorate by their immortal presence, the sorely-tempted novices of heroic honor and virtue. They rise before the soul's eye, a glorious company of immortals, from the battle-fields of unselfish fame; they come from the halls where patriotism thundered its ardent resolves, and from the scaffolds which its self-devotion transfigured into sacrificial altars; they issue from the hissing crowd of scorners and bigots through which the lone Reformer urged his victorious way; and they

come from that promised heaven on earth, beaming from the halo which encircles the head and beatifies the countenance of the saint, smiling celestial disdain of torture and death. From all these they come, — they press upon the consciousness, — not as dead memories of the past, but as living forces of the present, to stream into our spirits the resistless energies which gladden theirs: —

> "Filling the soul with sentiments august;
> The beautiful, the brave, the holy, and the just."

V.

THE AMERICAN MIND.

IN studying literature and history, we are at first attracted by particular events and individual minds, and we rise but gradually to the conception of nations and national minds, including, of course, under the latter phrase, all the great moving, vital powers expressed in the phenomena of a nation's life. The external history, the political institutions, the literature, laws, and manners of a people, are but its thoughts in visible or audible expression, and ever carry us back to the Mind whence they proceeded, and from which they received their peculiar national character. We cannot form just notions even of individuals without viewing them as related to their age and country, as expressions, more or less emphatic, of the National Mind, in whose depths their personal being had its birth, and from whose vitality they drew the pith and nerve of character. Thus Pericles, Scipio, and Chatham lose much of their raciness and genuineness if not considered as related in this way

to Greece, Rome, and England, who bore them, nurtured them, colored and directed their thoughts and passions, clothed them with power as with a garment; so that Greece saw in Pericles the mirror of her own supple strength and plastic intellect; and Rome beheld in Scipio the image of her own fixed will and large reason; and England recognized in Chatham's swift Norman energy and solid Saxon sense the child who had drained honesty, intelligence, and imperious pride from her own arrogant breast. It thus requires a great people to bear a brood of great men; for great men require strong incitements; a field for action; courage, power, glory, and virtue around as well as within them; and if powerful natures do not start naturally up, to meet any terrible emergency of a nation's life, we may be sure that the National Mind has become weak and corrupt, has "lost the breed of noble bloods," and that external enemies, like empirics dealing with consumptive patients, only accelerate a death already doomed by interior decay.

Thus, when we would comprehend in one inclusive term the intellect and individuality of Greece, or Rome, or England, we speak of the Greek, or Roman, or English mind. A national mind implies a nation, not a mere aggregation of individuals or

states; and we propose now to consider the question, Whether or not there is such a thing as an American Mind; and if so, what are its characteristics and tendencies; what is the inspiration, and what the direction it gives to the individual man in America?

In treating this subject, it is important that we avoid all that blatant and bragging tone in which American conceit thinly veils its self-distrust; that a deaf ear be presented to the exulting dissonance of the American chanticleer; that the Pilgrim Fathers be disturbed as little as possible in their well-earned graves; and that the different parts of the discourse be not found, like the compositions of certain eminent musicians, to be but symphonious variations on the one tune of "Yankee Doodle," or "Hail Columbia."

And, first, in view of the varieties of races and interests included under our government, can we assert the existence of an American Mind? We certainly cannot do this in the sense in which we say there was a Greek mind, whose birth, growth, maturity, and decay we can take in at one grasp of generalization; or in the sense in which we say there is an English mind, full-grown and thoroughly organized in manners, institutions, and literature. All that we can as-

sert is, that the thoughts, acts, and characters of Plymouth Puritan and Virginia Cavalier, through two centuries of active existence, have been fused into a mass of national thought, character, and life; and that this national life has sufficient energy and pliancy to assimilate the foreign natures incessantly pouring into it, and to grow, through this process of assimilation, into a comprehensive national mind. At present we can discern little more than tendencies, and the clash and conflict of the various elements; but the strongest force — the force to which the other elements gravitate, and by which they will all eventually be absorbed — is the Saxon-English element in its modified American form. The Celt, the German, the Englishman, the Dane, can exist here only by parting with his national individuality; for he is placed in a current of influences which inevitably melts him down into the mass of American life. But, while this absorption changes his character, it modifies also the character of the absorbing force; for the American Mind, with every infusion of foreign mind, adds to its being an element which does not lie as a mere novelty on its surface, but penetrates into its flexible and fluid substance, mixes with its vital blood, and enriches or impoverishes, elevates or depraves, its inmost nature; and so organic in its

character is this seeming abstraction of a nation, that, for every such infusion of a foreign element, each citizen is either injured or benefited, and finds that he acts and thinks the better or the worse for it. The balm or the poison steals mysteriously into him from all surrounding circumstances: from the press, from politics, from trade, from social communion, from the very air he breathes, come the currents of a new life to warm or to chill, to invigorate or deaden, his individual heart and brain. This fact goes under the name of a change in public sentiment; and have we not often witnessed its miracles of apostasy or conversion wrought on men whose characters we fondly thought fixed as fate?

The American Mind thus promises to be a composite mind, — composite in the sense of assimilation, not of mere aggregation. Its two original elements were the Englishman who came here to found, repair, or increase his estate, and the Englishman who was driven here by political and ecclesiastical oppression. Of these, the stronger of the two is undoubtedly the latter; and the last probe of historical and critical analysis touches him at the nation's centre and heart. This Puritan Englishman was all character: strong in the energy, courage, practical skill and hard persistency of character: with a characteristic

religion, morality, and temper of mind; at once the most forcible and the most exclusive man that the seventeenth century produced. Yet from this bigoted, austere, iron-willed, resisting, and persisting Saxon religionist — intolerant of other natures, from the very solidity and lowering might of his own — has sprung the flexible, assimilative, compromising, all-accomplished Yankee, who is neither Puritan nor Cavalier, Englishman, Irishman, Frenchman, nor German, but seems to have a touch of them all, and is ready to receive and absorb them all. A Protean personage, he can accommodate himself to any circumstances, to all forms of society, government, and religion. He is the staid, sensible farmer, merchant, or mechanic of New England, with his restlessness subdued into inveterate industry and power of rigid application; but he is also Sam Slick in the Provinces, and Nimrod Wildfire in Kentucky, and Jefferson Brick on the frontier. Through all disguises, and in every clime visited by sin and trade, peep the shrewd twinkle of his knowing eyes and the multiform movements of his cunning fingers! Let him drop down in Siberia or Japan, in England or Italy, in a Southern plantation or Western settlement, and he seems to say, "Gentlemen, behold the smartest man in all creation! one who will put your brain into his head,

get at your secret, and beat you in the art of being yourselves; so please fall into rank, deliver up your purses, acknowledge your born lord and king!"

We have not time to discuss here the question, how a national mind, which is distinguished above all others for mental hospitality and general availableness, had its root in a Puritanism as unaccommodating as it was powerful. It is, perhaps, sufficient to say, in explanation, that the Puritan, narrow and isolated as he seems, had one side of his nature wide open to liberal influences. His religious creed, it is true, was authoritative; he submitted to it himself, he enforced it upon others; but in political speculation he was audaciously independent. In the art and science of government he had no European equal either among statesmen or philosophers, and his politics, constantly connected as they were with his industrial enterprise, eventually undermined his despotic theology. But our business here is with the American Mind as it now is, and as it promises to be hereafter. This mind we must consider as having its expression in the nation's life; and certainly the first survey of it reveals a confusion of qualities which apparently elude analysis and defy generalization. This confusion results, as in the individual mind, from the variety of unassimilated elements in

contact or collision with the national personality; and accordingly its harmony is disturbed by a mob of noisy opinions, which never have, and some of which, we trust, never will, become living ideas and active forces. The consequence of this juxtaposition of mental organization with mental anarchy, in a national mind hospitable to everything, and now only visible to us in its fierce, swift, devouring growth, is a lack of solidity, depth, and tenacity in comparison with its nimbleness, and a disposition to combine a superficial enthusiasm for theories with a shrewd hold upon things throughout the broad field of its restless, curious, inventive, appropriative, scheming, plausible, glorious, and vainglorious activity. But the two grand leading characteristics of its essential nature are energy and impressibility, — an impressibility all alive to the most various objects, and receptive of elements conflicting with each other, and a primitive, inherent energy, too quick, fiery, and buoyant to be submerged by the wealth of life which its impressibility pours into it; an energy which whelms in its stream all slower and feebler natures with which it comes in contact, and rushes onward with the force of fate and the intelligence of direction.

In estimating the quantity and quality of this mental energy, we must ascertain the different channels

of work and production into which it is poured. Work of some kind is the measure of its power and the test of its quality; but we must avoid the fallacy of supposing that art and literature are the only expressions of a nation's intellect. It would, indeed, be a grotesque libel on some ten millions of educated people to declare that American literature represented more than a fraction of American intelligence. That intelligence has received a practical direction, and is expressed, not in Iliads and Æneids, not in Principias and Cartoons, but in commerce, in manufactures, in the liberal professions, in the mechanic arts, in the arts of government and legislation, in all those fields of labor where man grapples directly with nature, or with social problems which perplex his practical activity. To describe the miracles which American energy has wrought in these departments would be to invade a domain sacred to caucus speeches and all kinds of starred-and-striped bravado, and perhaps they speak for themselves with far more emphasis than orators can speak for them, having hieroglyphed, as Carlyle would say, "America, her mark," over a whole continent; but it is not generally admitted that mind — analytical, assimilative, constructive, creative mind — is as much implied in these practical directions of intelligence as in abstract science and the fine arts;

so that, if a sudden upward ideal turn were given to the national sentiment, the intellectual energy which would leave contriving railroads, calculating markets, and creating capital, and rush into epics, lyrics, and pastorals, would make Wall Street stare and totter, and our present generation of poets strangle themselves with their own lines. Indeed, observation, reason, and imagination are powers which do not lose their nature in their application to widely different objects. Thus Sir William Hamilton, the acutest analyst of Aristotle's mental processes, declares that abstruse and seemingly juiceless metaphysician to have had as great an imagination as Homer; and though we are prone to associate imagination with some elevation of sentiment, Shakespeare has given more of it to Iago, and Goethe has given more of it to Mephistopheles, than Nature gave to Bishop Heber, the purest of England's minor poets. Applying this principle to business, we shall find much to disturb the self-content of second-rate *litterateurs* and *savans*, who are accustomed to congratulate themselves that, if others have the money, they at least have the brains, if we should sharply scrutinize the mental processes of a first-rate merchant. Is it observation you demand? Behold with what keen accuracy he perceives and discriminates facts. Is it understanding? Look

at the long trains of reasoning, — the conclusion of each argument forming the premise of the next, — by which he moves, step by step, to an induction on whose soundness he risks character and fortune. Is it will? Mark him when a financial hurricane sweeps over the money-market, and observe how firm is his grasp of principles, and how intelligently his cold eye surveys the future, while croakers all around him are selling and sacrificing their property in paroxysms of imbecile apprehension. Is it imagination? See how to him, in his dingy counting-house, the past becomes present, and the distant, near; his mind speeding from St. Petersburg to London, from Smyrna to Calcutta, on wings which mock the swiftness of steamers and telegraphs; or, bridging over the spaces which divide sensible realities from ideal possibilities, see how he blends in one consistent idea and purpose stray thoughts and separate facts, whose hidden analogies the eye alone of imagination could divine. Is it, in short, general force and refinement of mind? Behold how comprehensive and how cautious is his glance over that sensitive, quivering, ever-shifting sea of commercial phenomena, — so wide as to belt the globe, and so intimately connected that a jar in any part sends a thrill through the whole, — and note with what subtle certainty of insight he penetrates beneath the

seeming anarchy, and clutches the slippery and elusive but unvarying laws. There is, indeed, a commercial genius, as well as a poetical and metaphysical genius, — the faculties the same, the sentiments and the direction different. Wealth may be, if you please, often insolent and unfeeling; may scorn, as visionary, things more important than wealth; but still it is less frequently blundered into than artists and philosophers are inclined to believe.

But though we can thus trace the same radical mental energy in industrial as in artistical labors, the force and durability of a nation's mind still demand not only diversity in its industrial occupations, but a diversity in the direction of the mind itself, which shall answer to the various sentiments and capacities of the soul. It is in this comprehensiveness that most nations fail, their activity being narrowed by the dominion of one impulse and tendency, which leads them to the summit of some special excellence, and then surely precipitates them into decay and ruin. Such narrowness is the death of mind, and national exclusiveness is national suicide. Thus the genius and capital of Italy were disproportionately directed to the fine arts; its wealth is now, accordingly, too much in palaces and cathedrals, in pictures and statues; and its worship of beauty, and

disdain of the practical, have resulted in an idle and impoverished people, deficient in persistency, in energy, even in artistical creativeness, and the easy prey of insolent French and Austrian arms and diplomacy. Such a country cannot be made free by introducing acres of rant on the rights of man, but by establishing commerce, manufactures, and a living industry. Again, the higher philosophy of Germany has been directed too exclusively to abstract speculation, altogether removed from actual life; and the reason is not to be sought in the assertion that the German mind lacks solidity, but in the fact that an arbitrary government has heretofore refused all freedom to German thought, unless it were exercised in a region above the earth and beyond politics, and there it may be the chartered libertine of chaos or atheism. By thus denying citizenship to the thinker, the state has made him licentious in speculation. He may theorize matter out of existence, Christ out of the Scriptures, and God out of the universe, and the government nods in the very sleepiness of toleration; but the moment he doubts the wisdom of some brazen and nonsensical lie embodied in a law, or whispers aught against the meanest official underling, he does it with the dungeon or the scaffold staring him in the face; and the grim headsman perhaps

reminds him that he lives under a paternal government, where he is free to blaspheme God, but not to insult the House of Hapsburg. Now, as the German's metaphysics have been vitiated by his lack of political rights, and as the Italian's exclusive devotion to art has extinguished even the energy by which art is produced, so there is danger that our extreme practical and political turn will vulgarize and debase our national mind to that low point where the energy and the motive to industrial production are lost. There can be no reasonable fear that the beautiful in art or the transcendental in thought will overwhelm our faculty of making bargains; but there is danger that the nation's worship of labors whose worth is measured by money will give a sordid character to its mightiest exertions of power, eliminate heroism from its motives, destroy all taste for lofty speculation and all love for ideal beauty, and inflame individuals with a devouring self-seeking, corrupting the very core of the national life. The safety of the American from this gulf of selfishness and avarice is to be looked for, partly in the prodigious moral, mental, and benevolent agencies he has established all around him, and partly in that not unamiable vanity by which he is impelled, not only to make money, but to do something great or "smart" in his way of making it.

This living and restless mass of being which forms the organic body of American life, — decent, orderly, respectable, intelligent, and productive, — with Economics as the watchword of its onward movement, has, from the intensity of its practical direction, roused the diseased opposition of two classes on the vanishing extremes of its solid substance; namely, a class of violent reformers who scorn economics on the ground of morality, and a class of violent radicals who scorn economics on the ground of glory; and these are in irreconcilable enmity with each other, as well as in distempered antagonism to the nation. The first class, commonly passing under the name of "Come-outers," have almost carried the principle of free-will and personal responsibility to the extent of converting themselves from individuals into individualisms, and they brand every man who consents to stay in a wicked community like ours as a participant in the guilt and profits of its sins. The Come-outer, when he thoroughly comes out, protests against the whole life of society, condemning, from certain abstract propositions, all its concrete laws, customs, morality, and religion, and strives to separate himself from the national mind, and live morally and mentally apart from it. But this last is a hopeless effort. To the community he is vitally bound, and he can

no more escape from it than he can escape from the grasp of the earth's attraction should he leap into the air for the purpose of establishing himself away off in space. The earth would say to him, as she hauled him back, "If you dislike my forests, fell them; if my mountains trouble you, blast through them; plant in me what you will, and, climate permitting, it shall grow; but as for your leaving me, and speeding off into infinite space on a vagabond excursion round the sun on your own account, that you shall not do, so help me — gravitation!"

It is needless to say that the Come-outer, in his zeal for abstract morality, glories in a heroic indifference to consequences, and a conscientious blindness to the mutual relations of rights and duties. Intrenched in some passionate proposition, he exhibits a perfect mastery of that logic of anarchy by which single virtues, detached from their relations, are pushed into fanaticism and almost take the form of vices. Virtue consists in the harmony of virtues; but, divorcing moral insight from moral sentiment, he ignores the complexity of the world's practical affairs, and would go, in the spirit of Schiller's zealot,

> "Right onward like the lightning and
> The cannon-ball, opening with murderous crash
> His way to blast and ruin."

Indeed, he sometimes brings to mind the story of that wise man who, when he desired to make a cup of tea, could hit upon no happier contrivance for boiling the kettle than by placing it in the kitchen and setting his house on fire. Again, he is sometimes raised to such a height of feverish indignation as to mistake his raptures of moral rage for prophetic fury, and anticipates the stern, sure, silent march of avenging laws with a blast that splits the brazen throats of denunciation's hundred trumpets. In view of the evils of the world he seems hungry for a fire from heaven to smite and consume iniquity. His prayer seems continually to be, "O Lord, why so slow?" and, though this discontent may be termed by some enthusiasts a divine impatience, it appears to be rather an impatience with Divinity. It is the exact opposite of that sublime repose in the purposes of Providence expressed by the philosophical historian, that "God moves through history as the giants of Homer through space: he takes a step, — and ages have rolled away!"

Doubtless, in this class of extreme social Protestants, — a class whose peculiarities we have almost heightened to caricature, in attempting to individualize its ideal, — there is much talent, much disinterestedness, much unflinching courage; and, if they

would make a modest contribution of these to the nation's moral life, they and society would both be gainers; but they are "self-withdrawn into such a wondrous depth" of hostile seclusion, that they are only visible in their occasional incursions, or when they encamp in the community during Anniversary Week. They are not, in fact, more narrow, more ridden by their one idea of morals, than many of our practical men, who are ridden by their one idea of money; but their extravagance of phrase, almost annihilating, as it does, the meaning of words considered as signs of things, prevents their influencing the people they attack; and, after beginning with a resounding promise to reform the world, they too often end in a desperate emulation among themselves to bear off the palm in vehemence of execration, launched against all those organized institutions by which society is protected from the worst consequences of its worldliness, selfishness, sensuality, and crime.

As the class of persons to which we have just referred push the principle of individualism to the extent of forswearing allegiance to the community, so there is another class, on the opposite extreme, who carry the doctrine of a Providence in human affairs to a fatalistic conclusion, which they are pleased to call Manifest Destiny; a doctrine which baptizes rob-

bery and murder as providential phenomena, — what kind and condescending patrons of Providence these blackguards are, to be sure! — of inherent national tendencies; considers national sins simply as necessary events in the nation's progress to glory; and, by treating every direction given to the public mind as inevitable, is sure to inflame and pamper the worst. This dogma — the coinage of rogues, who find it very convenient to call man's guilt by the name of God's providence — mostly obtains on the southern frontier of our country, where the settlers, amidst their forests and swamps, have a delectable view of the land flowing with milk and honey, which destiny manifestly intends they shall occupy, on the clearest principles of the argumentation of rapine. It must be admitted that this class of our fellow-sinners and citizens, by holding up endless war and hectic glory in the faces of our shrewd and prudent worldlings, scare them much more than the hottest and heartiest invectives of the reformers. We bear, it seems, with bland composure the charge of being robbers and murderers, tyrants and liberticides; but our blood runs cold at the vision of a bomb descending into Boston or New York, or the awful calamity involved in the idea of United States sixes going below par!

Manifest Destiny is, of course, a tempestuously-furious patriot, whose speech — ever under a high pressure of bombast — is plentifully bedizened with metaphors of his country's stars and stripes, and rapturous anticipations of the rascal's "good time coming." Among other Satanic fallacies he has one, conned out of the Devil's prayer-book, called, "Our country, right or wrong!" a stupid fallacy at the best, when we consider that the activity of every nation is bounded by inexorable moral laws as by walls of fire, to pass which is to be withered up and consumed; but especially fallacious from his lips, when we reflect that, practically, he inverts the maxim, and really means, "Our country, wrong or right, with a decided preference for the former." Spite of all professions, we must doubt the fidelity of that sailor who, in a hurricane, shows his devotion to his ship by assisting her tendency downward; and, on the same principle, we may doubt Mr. Manifest Destiny's all-for-glory, nothing-for-money patriotism.

The fallacy, indeed, of the fatalistic scheme, as applied to nations, is the same as when applied to individuals; and its doctrine of inevitable tendencies comes from considering mind as a blind force, not as an intelligent, responsible, self-directing energy. A plastic, fluid, impressible national mind, like the

American, receives a new impulse and direction for every grand sentiment, every great thought, every heroic act, every honest life, contributed to it; and that philosophy which screams out to reasonable citizens, "The tendency of the nation is toward the edge of the bottomless pit, *therefore*, patriotically assist the movement," is the insane climax of the *non sequitur* in political logic. Why, we can shield ourselves from such a conclusion, with no better reasoning than that employed by the grave-digger in Hamlet, in discussing the question of suicide: "Here lies the water; here stands the man: if the man go to the water and drown himself, it is — will he, nill he — he goes; but if the water come to him, and drown him, he drowns not himself: argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life." We may be sure that no nation, which goes not to the fire, will ever have the fire come to it. Heaven is liberal of its blessings and benignities, but it practises a rigid economy in dispensing its smiting curses, and lets loose its reluctant angels of calamity and death only as they are drawn down by the impious prayers of folly and crime!

If the too exclusive direction of the American mind to industrial production has not been much checked by the two antagonistic extremes of radical-

ism its money-ocracy has provoked, and for whose excesses it is to a great degree responsible, we must look for a healthier opposition to it in the various classes of moderate dissentients and reformers, who are not so much disgusted with the community as to lose all power of influencing it, and who are steadily infusing into their own and the national character loftier ideas and more liberalizing tastes. Our churches, collegiate institutions, and numerous societies established for moral and benevolent ends, are connected with the national mind, and at the same time are inspired by influences apart from it; but still, we must admit that just in proportion as the nation's life circulates through them is their tendency to temporize with Mammon. The Church, for instance, exercises a vast and beneficent influence in spreading moral and religious ideas; but do we not often hear sermons in which industrial prosperity is unconsciously baptized with great pomp of sacred rhetoric? and prayers, in which railroads and manufactories hold a place among Divine favors altogether different from the estimate in which they are held above? Do we, mad as we all are after riches, hear often enough from the pulpit the spirit of those words in which Dean Swift, in his epitaph on the affluent and profligate Colonel Chartres, announces the small es-

teem of wealth in the eyes of God, from the fact of his thus lavishing it upon the meanest and basest of his creatures?

Our theology is closer to the public mind, both to act and to be acted upon, than our literature. Indeed, if we take the representative men of those classes whose productions, ethical, poetical, and artistical, we call American literature and art, we shall find that the national life is not so much their inspiration as it is the object they would inspire. Channing and Allston, for instance, have a purified delicacy and refinement of nature, a constant reference to the universal in morals and taste, and a want of ruddy and robust strength, indicating that they have not risen genially out of the national mind, and betraying, in all their words and colors, that surrounding influences were hostile rather than sustaining to their genius. Their works, accordingly, have neither the exclusiveness nor the raciness and gusto characteristic of genius which is national. The same principle applies to our poetical literature, which worships Beauty, but not beautiful America. If you observe the long line of the English poets, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Dryden, Pope, Byron, with hardly the exceptions of Spenser and Milton, you will find that, however heaven-high some of them are in ele-

vation, they all rest on the solid base of English character; idealize, realize, or satirize English history, customs, or scenery, English modes of thought and forms of society, English manners or want of manners, English life and English men, — are full, in short, of English blood. But our most eminent poets — Dana, Emerson, Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell — are more or less idealists, from the necessity of their position. Though they may represent the woods and streams of American nature, they commonly avoid the passions and thoughts of American human nature. The "haunt and main region of their song" is man rather than men; humanity in its simple elements, rather than complex combinations; and their mission is to stand somewhat apart from the rushing stream of American industrial life, and, assimilating new elements from other literatures, or directly from visible nature, to pour into that stream, as rills into a river, thoughtfulness, and melody, and beauty. Their productions being thus *contributions* to the national mind, rather than offsprings of it, are contemplative rather than lyrical, didactic rather than dramatic.

Perhaps the fairest and least flattering expression of our whole national life may be found in our politics; for in limited monarchies and in democracies it

is in politics that all that there is in the public mind of servility, stupidity, ferocity, and unreasoning prejudice is sure to come glaringly out; and certainly our politics will compare favorably with those of Greece and Rome, of France and England, in respect either to intelligence or morality. In no country is the government more narrowly watched; in no country do large parties, bound together by an interest, more readily fall apart on a principle; and when we consider that, in practical politics, force and passion, not reason and judgment, are predominant, — that men vote with a storm of excitement hurrying them on, — this fact indicates that the minor moralities have to a great extent become instincts with the people. It would be impossible to give here even a scanty view of this political expression of our national mind with its sectional contests, its struggles of freedom with slavery, its war of abstract philosophies on concrete interests, its impassioned moralities, and no less impassioned immoralities; but perhaps a few remarks on three great statesmen, who are marked by unmistakable local and national traits, and who were genuine products of American life, may not be out of place even here. We refer to Webster, Clay, and Calhoun. These, though "dead, yet speak"; and we shall allude to them as if they still occupied

bodily that position in our politics which they unquestionably occupy mentally. Such men can only die with the movements they originated.

Of these three eminences of our politics, of late years, Webster may be called the most comprehensive statesman, Clay the most accomplished politician, and Calhoun the nimblest and most tenacious sectional partisan. Webster, on the first view, seems a kind of Roman-Englishman, — a sort of cross between Cincinnatus and Burke; but, examined more closely, he is found to be a natural elevation in the progress of American life, a man such as New Hampshire bore him, and such as Winthrop and Standish, Washington and Jay, Hamilton and Madison, have made him; a man who drew the nutriment of character altogether from American influences; and, especially, a man representing the iron of the national character as distinguished from its quicksilver. The principal wealth of New Hampshire is great men and water-power; but, instead of keeping them to herself, she squanders them on Massachusetts, and Webster was one of these free gifts.

If we compare Webster with Calhoun, we shall find in both the same firm mental grasp of principles, the same oversight of the means of popularity, and the same ungraceful and almost sullen self-assertion, at

periods when policy would have dictated a more facile accommodativeness. Their intellects, though both in some degree entangled by local interests and opinions, have inherent differences, visible at a glance. Webster's mind has more massiveness than Calhoun's, is richer in culture and variety of faculty, and is gifted with a wider sweep of argumentation; but it is not so completely compacted with character, and has, accordingly, less inflexible and untiring persistence toward an object. Both are comparatively unimpressible, but Webster's understanding recognizes and includes facts which his imagination may refuse to assimilate; while Calhoun arrogantly ignores everything which contradicts his favorite opinions. The mind of Webster, weighty, solid, and capacious, looks before and after; by its insight reads principles in events, by its foresight reads events in principles; and, arching gloriously over all the phenomena of a widely complex subject of contemplation, views things, not singly, but in their multitudinous relations; yet the very comprehension of his vision makes him somewhat timid, and his moderation, accordingly, lacks the crowning grace of moral audacity. Calhoun has audacity, but lacks comprehensiveness.

As Webster's mind, from its enlargement of view, has an instinctive intellectual conscientiousness, the

processes of his reasoning are principally inductive, rising from facts to principles; while Calhoun's are principally deductive, descending from principles to facts. Now deduction is doubtless a sublime exercise of logical genius, provided the principle be reached — as it is reached by Webster, when he uses the process — by induction; for it gives the mind power to divine the future, and converts prophecy into a science. Thus, from the deductive law of gravitation we can predict the appearance of stellar phenomena thousands of years hence. Edmund Burke is the greatest of British statesmen, in virtue of his discovery and application of deductive laws applicable to society and government. But the mischief of Calhoun's deductive method is, that, by nature or position, his understanding is controlled by his will; and, consequently, his principles are often arbitrarily or capriciously chosen, do not rise out of the nature of things, but out of the nature of Mr. Calhoun; and therefore it is frequently true of him, what Macaulay untruly declares of Burke, that "he chooses his position like a fanatic, and defends it like a philosopher," — as it might be said that Clay chooses his like a tactician, and defends it like a fanatic.

If we carefully study the speeches of Webster and Calhoun, in one of those great Congressional battles

where they were fairly pitted against each other, we shall find that Webster's mind darts beneath the smooth and rapid stream of his opponent's deductive argument at a certain point, — fastens fatally on some phrase, or fact, or admission, in which the fallacy lurks, — and then devotes his reply to a searching analysis and logical overthrow of that, without heeding the rest. Calhoun, of course, has the ready rejoinder that the thing demolished is twisted out of its relations; and then, with admirable control of his face, proceeds to dip into Webster's inductive argument, to extract some fact or principle which is indissolubly related to what goes before and comes after, and thus really misrepresents the reasoning he seemingly answers. To overthrow Calhoun you have, like Napoleon at Wagram, only to direct a tremendous blow at the centre; to overthrow Webster, like Napoleon at Borodino, you must rout the whole line.

In the style of the two men we have, perhaps, the best expression of their character; for style, it has been well said, "is the measure of power, — as the waves of the sea answer to the winds that call them up." Webster's style varies with the moods of his mind, — short, crisp, biting, in sarcasm; luminous and even in statement; rigid, condensed, massive,

in argumentation; lofty and resounding in feeling; fierce, hot, direct, overwhelming, in passion. Calhoun's has the uniform vigor and clear precision of a spoken essay.

Clay — the love of American economics, as Webster was the pride — had all those captivating personal qualities which attract men's admiration, at the same time that they enforce their respect; and was especially gifted with that flexibility, — that prompt, intuitive, heart-winning grace, — which his great contemporaries lacked. The secret of his influence must not be sought in his printed speeches. We never go to them as we go to Webster's and Calhoun's for political philosophy and vehement logic. But if Webster as an orator was inductive, and convinced the reason, and Calhoun deductive, and dazzled the reason, Clay was most assuredly seductive, and carried the votes. The nature of Clay, without being deficient in force, was plastic and fluid, readily accommodating itself to the moment's exigency, and more solicitous to comprehend all the elements of party power than all the elements of political thought. His faculties and passions seem all to have united in one power of personal impressiveness, and that personality once penetrated a whole party, bound together discordant interests and antipathies, made itself

felt as inspiration equally in Maine and Louisiana, concentrated in itself the enthusiasm of sense for principles, and of sensibility for men; and these, the qualities of a powerful political leader, who makes all the demagogues work for him, without being himself a demagogue, indicated his possession of something, at least, of that

> "Mystery of commanding;
> That birth-hour gift, that art-Napoleon,
> Of winning, fettering, wielding, moulding, banding
> The hearts of millions, till they move as one."

But the fact that Clay never reached the object of his ambition proves that he was not a perfect specimen of the kind of character to which he belonged; and his personality, — swift, fusing, potent as it was, — alert, compromising, supple as it was, — still was not under thoroughly wise direction; and a sense of honor morbidly quick, and a resentment of slight nervously egotistic, sometimes urged our most accomplished politician into impolitic acts, which levelled the labors of years.

Perhaps the best test even of a man's intellect is the way he demeans himself when he is enraged; and in this Webster was pre-eminent above all American orators, while Calhoun was apt to lose his balance, and become petty and passionate, and Clay

to exhibit a kind of glorious recklessness. Most of the faults of Webster proceeded from his comprehensiveness of understanding being often unaccompanied by a vigorous impetus from sentiment and feeling; and some of his orations are therefore unimpassioned statements and arguments, which, however much they may claim our assent as logicians, do not stir, and thrill, and move us as men. Coming from but one portion of his own nature, they touch only one portion of the nature of others, and wield no dominion over the will. Such was his celebrated speech on the Slavery question, which so many found difficult to answer and impossible to accept. Not so was it when passion and sentiment penetrated his understanding; for, in Webster, passion was a fire which fused intellect and character into one tremendous personal force, and then burst out that resistless eloquence in which words have the might and meaning of things, — that true mental electricity, not seen in dazzling, zigzag flashes, — not heard in a grand, reverberating peal *over* the head, — but in which, mingling the qualities of light and sound, the blue bright flame startles and stings the eye at the very moment the sharp crash pierces and stuns the ear. No brow smitten by that bolt, though the brow of a Titan, could ever afterward lift itself above the crowd without being marked by its enduring scar;

and it was well that a great, and not easily moved, nature, abundantly tried by all that frets and teases the temper, should thus have borne within himself such a terrible instrument of avenging justice, when meanness presumed too far on the moderation of that large intellect, when insolence goaded too sharply that sullen fortitude!

The three great statesmen to whom we have referred, taken together, cover three all-important elements in every powerful national mind, — resistance, persistence, and impressibility; and each, by representing at the same time some engrossing industrial interest, indicates that practical direction of the national energies to which we have all along referred. In this region of industry the nation has been grandly creative; and, by establishing the maxim that the production of wealth is a matter secondary to its distribution, it promises to be as grandly beneficent. But, perhaps, in the art and science of government it has been more creative and more beneficent than in the province of industry. The elements of order and radicalism it embosoms are in a healthy rather than destructive conflict, so that we may hope that even the problem of slavery will be settled without any widespread ruin and devastation. The mischief of radicalism in other countries is, that it commences ref-

ormation by abjuring law; accordingly, it opposes political power on the principles of anarchy, and wields it on the principles of despotism. Here the toughest problem in the science of government has been practically solved, by the expedient of legalizing resistance; and thus, by providing legal inlets and outlets for insurrection and revolution, we reap the benefits of rebellion, and avoid its appalling evils.* A nation which has done this can afford to bear some taunts on its vices and defects, especially as its sensitive vanity impels it to appropriate the truth contained in every sarcasm under which it winces.

It now remains to ask how a national mind like the American, with its powers generally directed by its sentiments to commerce, industrial production, law, and politics, — which are the most lucrative occupations, — and but relatively directed to reforms, — which are the most unprofitable, — how it appears when tested by those virtues which are the conditions of a nation's durable strength? The question is not one of particulars, because, in every social system, no matter how far advanced in humane culture, there will always be individuals and small classes representing the vices of every grade of civilization which

* The crime of the Southern Rebellion specially consisted in violating this fundamental principle of American politics.

history or tradition has recorded, from cannibals all the way down to dandies. We have our share of New Zealand and our share of Almacks; but in viewing a national mind we must fasten on the strongest elements and the average humanity. Looked at from this liberal point, American life would bear comparatively well the tests of prudence, moderation, and benevolence; a little less confidently, those of veracity, steadfastness, and justice; and considerably less those of beauty, heroism, and self-devotion.

But it is not so much in the present as in the future that we have the grandest vision of the American mind. We have seen that its organic substance, as distinguished from the unassimilated elements in contact or conflict with it, is solidly and productively practical; and as it is a sleepless energy, resisting, persisting, and impressible, we may hope that it will transmute into itself the best life of other national minds, without having its individuality overwhelmed; that it will be strong and beautiful with their virtues and accomplishments, without being weak with their vices and limitations; and that, continually enriched by new and various mental life, it will result in being a comprehensive national mind, harmoniously combining characteristics caught from all nations, — so that Greece might in it recognize beauty, and Rome

will, and Germany earnestness, and Italy art, and France vivacity, and Ireland impulse, and England tenacity. It is in this contemplation of America as a conquering Mind that we should most delight, — a mind worthy of the broad continent it is to overarch, — a mind too sound at the core for ignorance to stupefy, or avarice to harden, or lust of power to consume, — a mind full in the line of the historical progress of the race, holding wide relations with all communities and all times, listening to every word of cheer or warning muttered from dead or thundered from living lips, and moving down the solemn pathway of the ages, an image of just, intelligent, beneficent Power!

1857.

VI.

THE ENGLISH MIND.

IT is hardly necessary for us to say that a nation is not a mere aggregation of existing individuals, or collection of provinces and colonies, but an organic living body of laws, institutions, manners, and literature, whose present condition is the result of the slow growth of ages, and whose roots stretch far back into the past life of the people. By a national mind we mean the whole moral and mental life of a nation, as embodied in its facts and latent in its sentiments and ideas. This *body* of mind, the organization of centuries, exercises, in virtue of its mass, a positive attractive force on all individual minds within the sphere of its influence, compelling them to be partakers of the thoughts and passions of the national heart and brain, and receiving in return their contributions of individual thoughts and passions. Now a national mind is great according to the vitality and vigor at the centre of its being, the fidelity with which it resists whatever is foreign to its own na-

ture, and its consequent perseverance in its own inherent laws of development. Tried by these tests, that pyramidal organism, with John Bull at the base and Shakespeare at the apex, which we call the English mind, is unexcelled, if not unequalled, in modern times for its sturdy force of being, its muscular strength of faculty, the variety of its directing sentiments, and its tough hold upon existence. No other national mind combines such vast and various creativeness, and presents so living a synthesis of seemingly elemental contradictions, which is at the same time marked by such distinctness of individual features. That imperial adjective, English, fits its sedition as well as its servility, its radicalism as well as its conservatism, its squalor as well as its splendor, its vice as well as its virtue, its morality and religion as well as its politics and government. The unity of its nature is never lost in all the prodigious variety of its manifestation. Prince, peasant, Cavalier, Roundhead, Whig, Tory, poet, penny-a-liner, philanthropist, ruffian, — William Wilberforce in Parliament, Richard Turpin on the York road, — all agree in being English, all agree in a common contempt, blatant or latent, for everything not English. Liberty is English, wisdom is English, philosophy is English, religion is English, earth is English, air is

English, heaven is English, hell is English. And this imperious dogmatism, too, has none of the uneasy self-distrust which peeps through the vociferous brag of corresponding American phenomena; but, expressing its seated faith in egotism's most exquisite *non sequiturs*, it says stoutly, with Parson Adams, "A schoolmaster is the greatest of men, and I am the greatest of schoolmasters"; and, moreover, it believes what it says. The quality is not in the tongue, but in the character of the nation.

This solid self-confidence and pride of nationality, this extraordinary content with the image reflected in the mirror of self-esteem, indicates that the national mind is not tormented by the subtle sting of abstract opinions or the rebuking glance of unrealized ideals, but that its reason and imagination work on the level of its Will. The essential peculiarity, therefore, of the English Mind is its basis in Character, and consequent hold upon facts and disregard of abstractions. Coarse, strong, massive, sturdy, practical, — organizing its thoughts into faculties, and toughening its faculties into the consistency of muscle and bone, — its whole soul is so embodied and embrained, that it imprints on its most colossal mental labors the stern characteristics of sheer physical strength. It not only has fire, but fuel enough to feed its fire. Its thoughts

are acts, its theories are institutions, its volitions are events. It has no ideas not inherent in its own organization, or which it has not assimilated and absorbed into its own nature by collision or communion with other national minds. It is enriched but never overpowered by thoughts and impulses from abroad, for whatever it receives it forces into harmony with its own broadening processes of interior development. Thus the fiery, quick-witted, wilful and unscrupulous Norman encamped in its domains, and being unable to reject him, and its own stubborn vitality refusing to succumb, it slowly and sullenly, through long centuries, absorbed him into itself, and blended fierce Norman pride and swift Norman intelligence with its own solid substance of sense and humor. By the same jealous and resisting, but assimilative method, it gradually incorporated the principles of Roman law into its jurisprudence, and the spirit of Italian, Spanish, and German thought into its literature, receiving nothing, however, which it did not modify with its own individuality, and scrawling "England, her mark," equally on what it borrowed and what it created.

A national mind thus rooted in character, with an organizing genius directed by homely sentiments, and with its sympathies fastened on palpable aims and

objects, has all the strength which comes from ideas invigorated but narrowed by facts. General maxims disturb it not, for it never acts from reason alone, or passion alone, or understanding alone; but reason, passion, understanding, conscience, religious sentiment, are all welded together in its thoughts and actions, and pure reason, or pure conscience, or pure passion, it not only neglects, but stigmatizes. Its principles are precedents buttressed by prejudices, and these are obstinately asserted from force of character rather than reasoned out by force of intellect. "Taffy," said swearing Lord Chancellor Thurlow to Lord Kenyon, "you are obstinate, and give no reasons; now Scott is obstinate, too, but he gives reasons, — and —— bad ones they are!"

Indeed, the English mind believes what it practises, and practises what it believes, and is rarely weakened in its active power by perceiving a law of morality or intelligence higher than its own practical morality and intelligence. It meets all emergencies with expedients, and gives to its reasons the emphasis of its will. Bringing everything to the test of common sense and fact, it is blind to the operation of the great laws of rectitude and retribution objective to itself, but trusts that the same practical sagacity and practical energy which have heretofore met real dan-

gers, will meet impending dangers when they become real. It has no forecasting science of right, but when self-preservation depends on its doing right, the most abstract requirements of justice will be "done into English" in as coarse and as sensible a way as its old hack-writers translated Juvenal and Plutarch. In the mean time it prefers to trust

> "In the good old plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> That they should keep who can."

Indeed, such a complete localization of thought, morality, and religion was never before witnessed in a civilized nation. It is content with the relative and the realized in manners, laws, institutions, literature, and religion; and it disowns the jurisdiction, and sulkily disregards the judgments, of absolute truth and morality. If its imperious and all-grasping tyranny provokes a province into just rebellion, national statesmen send national warriors to put it down, and prayers are offered in national churches for the victory. The history of its Indian empire — an empire built up by the valor and crimes of Clive, and preserved by the serene remorselessness of Hastings's contriving intellect — is as interesting as the "Pirate's Own Book," and exhibits the triumph of similar principles; but whatever is done for the

national aggrandizement is not only vindicated but baptized; and when Edmund Burke made the most desperate effort in the history of eloquence to induce the highest court of the realm to apply the Higher Law to the enormities of Hastings, he not only failed of success, but the English mind condemns him now for vituperating the character of "an eminent servant of the public." There is no crime in such matters but to *fail* in crime. We have heard, lately, many edifying and sonorous sentences quoted from English jurists about the law of God overriding the law of man; but it is not remembered that when an English jurist speaks of the law of God, he really means that fraction of it which he thinks has become, or is becoming, the law of England. To make a true Englishman responsible for any maxim which is essentially abstract, *in*organic, *un*precedented, and foreign to the interior working of the national mind, is to misconceive both his meaning and his nature. No great English humorist — that is, no man who sees through phrases into characters — has ever blundered into such a mistake. The true localizing principle is hinted by Goldsmith's braggart theologian: "When I say religion, I of course mean the Christian religion; and when I say Christian religion, I would have you know, sir, that I mean the Church of England!"

Now it is evident that a national mind thus proud and practical, thus individual and insular, making, as it does, the senses final, and almost deifying rank and property, would naturally exhibit in its manners and institutions a double aristocracy of blood and capital. Hence results the most hateful of English characteristics, — the disposition, we mean, of each order of English society to play the sycophant to the class above it, and the tyrant to the class below it; though, from the inherent vigor and independence of the Englishman's nature, his servility is often but the mask of his avarice or hatred. The best representative of this unamiable combination of arrogance and meanness is that full-blown Briton, or, as Parr would have called him, that "ruffian in ermine," Lord Chancellor Thurlow, who could justly claim the rare distinction of being the greatest bully and the greatest parasite of his time. But this peculiarity is commonly modified by nobler and sturdier qualities, and the nation is especially felicitous in the coarse but strong practical morality which is the life of its manners. The fundamental principles of social order are never brought into question by the average English mind, and even its sensuality is honest and hearty, unsophisticated by that subtile refinement of thinking by which a Frenchman will blandly violate the ten

commandments on philosophic principles, and with hardly the disturbance of a single rule of etiquette. In the domestic virtues likewise, — in those attachments which cluster round a family and a home, — the Englishman is pre-eminent. The Frenchman is wider and more generous in his generalities, more of a universal philanthropist; but his joy is out of doors, and he would hardly, if he could help it, dine at home for the salvation of mankind. But political liberty is only for those who have homes and love them; and though the Englishman's theories are narrow, they are facts, while the Frenchman's, if more expansive, are unrealized.

The leading defect of English manners, however, is consequent on their chief merit. Being the natural expression of the national mind, all the harshness as well as all the honesty of the people is sincerely expressed in them; and they press especially hard on the poor and the helpless. In the mode of conducting political disputes, in the ferocity and coarseness of political and personal libels, and in the habit of calling unpleasant objects by their most unpleasant names, we perceive the national contempt of all the decent draperies which mental refinement casts over sensual tastes and aggressive passions. The literature of the nation strikingly exhibits this ingrained coarse

ness at the foundation of its mind, and its greatest poets and novelists are full of it in their delineations of manners and character. Chaucer and Shakespeare humorously represent it; Ben Jonson and Fielding, the two most exclusively English of all England's imaginative writers, are at once its happy expounders and bluff exponents; and Swift, whose large Saxon brain was rendered fouler by misanthropy, absolutely riots in the gutter. This robust manhood, anchored deep in strong sensations and rough passions, gives also a peculiar pugnacity to English manners. No man can rise there who cannot stand railing, stand invective, stand ridicule, "stand fight." Force of character bears remorselessly down on everything and everybody that resists it, and no man is safe who cannot emphasize the "me." This harshness is a sign of lusty health and vigor, and doubtless educates men by opposition into self-reliance; but woe unto those it crushes! Thus a friend of ours once strayed, in the early part of the present century, into the Court of King's Bench, where Lord Ellenborough then sat in all the insolence of office, and where Mr. Garrow, the great cross-examining advocate, then wantoned in all the arrogance of witness-badgering. The first object that arrested his attention was a middle-aged woman, whose plump red face and full form displayed

no natural tendency to disorders of the nerves, but who was now very palpably in a violent fit of hysterics. Shocked at this exhibition, he asked a bystander the cause of her extraordinary emotion. "O," was the indifferent reply, "she is a witness who has just been cross-examined by Mr. Garrow."

As English manners grew naturally out of English character, so England's social and political institutions have grown naturally out of English manners, and all are hieroglyphics of national qualities. They express, in somewhat grotesque forms and combinations, the thoughts and sentiments of the ruling classes from age to age. Springing originally out of the national heart and brain, we may be sure that, however absurd and even inhuman some of them may now appear, they served a practical purpose, and met a national want, at the period of their establishment; and though the forms in which the national life is embodied are clung to with a prejudice which sometimes boils into fanatical fury, and though the dead body of an institution is often fondly retained long after its spirit is departed, this sullen conservative bigotry gives stability and working power to the government amidst the wildest storms of faction, and its evils are moderated by a kind of reluctant reason and justice, which in the long run gets the mastery. Thus the constitution

of the House of Commons, before the Reform Bill of 1832, was not fitted to the altered circumstances of the nation, and the reformers really adhered to the principle of English popular representation in their almost revolutionary changes in its forms; but it would be a great error to suppose that in the unreformed House of Commons legislation did not regard the interest of unrepresented constituencies, because it abstractly had the power to disregard them. Such an impolitic exercise of political monopoly would have reformed the representation a hundred years ago. So was it, less than half a century ago, with the horrible severity of the criminal law, which made small thefts capital crimes, punishable with death. Conservatives like Eldon and Ellenborough opposed their repeal as vehemently as if the national safety depended on their remaining as scarecrows on the statute books, though as judges they would no more have executed them than they would have committed murder. It is understood in England that when the national mind outgrows a law, "its inactivity," in Plunket's phrase, "is its only excuse for existence," though to propose its repeal is to incur the imputation of Jacobinism. "The wisdom of our ancestors," is the Englishman's reverent phrase as he contemplates these gems from the antique; but we

should do injustice both to his humanity and his shrewdness, did we reason deductively from them to results, as though they were still living institutions issuing now in ghastly facts. He keeps the withered and ugly symbols of his old bigotries for ornament, not for use!

Indeed, this unreasoning devotion to organic forms, even after they have lost all organic life, is ever accompanied by a sagacity which swiftly accommodates itself to emergencies; and the sense of the people never shines so resplendently as in avoiding the full logical consequences of its nonsense, — which nonsense we shall find had commonly its origin in sense. Thus the abject theory of the Divine Right of Kings was a politic and convenient fiction, in the early days of the English Reformation, to operate against the Jesuit theory of the sovereignty of the people, by which the Papists hoped to re-establish Romanism; but when Protestant kings carried the theory out into practice, the genius of the people as easily extemporized a divine right of regicide and revolution. But while the original theory was politic, either as a weapon against Romanism or faction, it is curious to observe how eagerly it was inculcated by the national Church as a part of religion. South, speaking of deadly sins, refers to "blaspheming God,

disobeying the King, *and the like"*; and even the heavenly-minded Taylor asserts, in perhaps the greatest of his sermons, "that perfect submission to kings is the glory of the Protestant cause"; and this perfect submission, not to the constitution and the laws, but to the king, he proceeds, with superb sophistries, to invest with the dignity of one of those Christian works which are the signs of Christian faith. But the moment that James the Second laid a rough hand on the established safeguards of the property, lives, and religion of the nation, the whole people fell away from him; the Tory who preached submission as a duty, and the Whig who claimed rebellion as a right, were both instantly united in a defence of their common English heritage; and a tempest of opposition arose whose breath blew the monarch from his throne.

And this brings us to the consideration of the concrete and national character of English freedom, which, having its foundations deep in the manners of the people, and having organized its ideas in protecting institutions, has withstood all assaults because it has ever been intrenched in facts. The national genius embodies, incarnates, realizes all its sentiments and thoughts. Establishing rights by the hard process of growth and development, it holds them with a

giant's grasp. Seeing in them the grotesque reflection of its own anomalous nature, it loves them with the rude tenderness of a lioness for her whelps. It cares little for abstract liberty, but it will defend its liberties to the death. It cares little for the Rights of Man, but for the rights of English man it will fight "till from its bones the flesh be hacked." It cares little for grand generalities about liberty, equality, and fraternity; but, swearing lusty oaths, and speaking from the level of character, it bluntly informs rulers that, loving property, it will pay no taxes which it does not itself impose, and that, being proud, it will stand no invasion of its inherited property of political privileges. It will allow the government to exercise almost tyrannical power provided it violates no established forms of that Liberty, "whose limbs were made in England." Its attachment to the externals of its darling rights has a gruff pugnacity and mastiff-like grip, which sometimes exhibit the obstinate strength of stupidity itself, — a quality which Sheridan happily hit off when he objected in Parliament to a tax on mile-stones, because, he said, "they were a race who could not meet to remonstrate." So strong is its realizing faculty, so intensely does it live in the concrete, that it forces every national thought into an institution.

Thus it found rough rebellious qualities seated deep in its arrogant nature, and demanding expression. These first found vent in bloody collisions with its rulers, but eventually battled themselves into laws by which resistance was legalized; and thus the homely but vigorous imagination of the English Mind, organizing by instinct, at last succeeded in the stupendous effort of consummating the wedlock of liberty and order by organizing even insurrection, and forcing anarchy itself to wear the fetters of form. This, we need not say, is the greatest achievement in the art of politics that the world has ever seen; and England and the United States are the only nations which have yet been able to perform it. Any child can prattle prettily about human rights and resistance to tyrants; but to tame the wild war-horses of radical passions, and compel their hot energies to subserve the purposes of reason, is the work of a full-grown and experienced man.

We now come to a most delicate topic, which can hardly be touched without offence, or avoided without an oversight of the most grotesque expression of the English Mind. The determining sentiments of the people are to war, industry, and general individual and material aggrandizement, — to things human rather than to things divine; but every true Englishman,

however much of a practical Atheist he may be, feels a genuine horror of infidelity, and always has a religion to swear by, and, if need be, to fight for. He makes it — we are speaking of the worldling — subordinate to English laws and customs, *Anglicizes* it, and never allows it to interfere with his selfish or patriotic service to his country, or with the gratification of his passions; but he still believes it, and, what is more, believes that he himself is one of its edifying exponents. This gives a delicious unconscious hypocrisy to the average national mind, which has long been the delight and the butt of English humorists. Its most startling representative was the old swearing, drinking, licentious, church-and-king Cavalier, who was little disposed, the historian tells us, to shape his life according to the precepts of the Church, but who was always "ready to fight knee-deep in blood for her cathedrals and palaces, for every line of her rubric, and every thread of her vestments." Two centuries ago, Mrs. Aphra Behn described the English squire as "going to church every Sunday morning, to set a good example to the lower orders, and as getting the parson drunk every Sunday night to show his respect for the Church." Goldsmith, in that exquisite sketch wherein he records the comments made by representative men of various classes on the

probable effects of a political measure, makes his soldier rip out a tremendous oath as a pious preliminary to the expression of his fear that the measure in question will ruin the Church. The cry, raised generally by cunning politicians, that "the Church is in danger," is sure to stir all the ferocity, stupidity, and ruffianism of the nation in its support. Religion in England is, in fact, a part of politics, and therefore the most worldly wear its badges. Thus all English warriors, statesmen, and judges are religious men, but the religion is ever subordinate to the profession or business in hand. "Mr. Whitefield," said Lord George Sackville, condescendingly, "you may preach to my soldiers, provided you say nothing against the articles of war." Mr. Prime Minister Pitt spends six days of the week in conducting a bloody war to defend the political, and especially the religious institutions of England against the diabolical designs of French Atheists and Jacobins, and on Sunday morning fights a duel on Wimbledon Common. Sometimes the forms of religion are condescendingly patronized because they are accredited marks of respectability. Percival Stockdale tells us that he was appointed chaplain to a man-of-war, stationed at Plymouth, but found it difficult to exercise his functions. He at last directly requested the cap-

tain to allow him to read prayers. "Well," said the officer, "you had better, Mr. Stockdale, begin next Sunday, as I suppose this thing must be done *as long as Christianity is about.*" But perhaps the quaintest example of this combination of business and theology is found in that English judge, who was condemning to death, under the old barbarous law, a person who had forged a one-pound note. Lord Campbell tells us that, after exhorting the criminal to prepare for another world, he added: "And I trust that, through the mediation and merits of our blessed Redeemer, you may *there* experience that mercy which a due regard to the credit of the paper currency of the country forbids you to hope for *here.*" Indeed, nothing could more forcibly demonstrate how complete is the organization of the English Mind than this interpenetration of the form of the religious element with its most earthly aims; and therefore it is that the real piety of the nation, whether ritual or evangelical, is so sturdy and active, and passes so readily from Christian doctrines into Christian virtues. In its best expressions it is somewhat local; but what it loses in transcendent breadth and elevation of sentiment it gains in practical faculty to perform every-day duties.

We must have performed this analysis of the level

English Mind with a shameful obtuseness, if we have not all along indicated and implied its capacity to produce and nurture great and strong men of action and men of thought. It has, in truth, been singularly fertile in forcible individuals, whose characters have the compound raciness of national and personal peculiarity, and relish of the soil whence they sprung. Few of these, however cosmopolitan may have been their manners, or comprehensive their reason, have escaped the grasp of that gravitation by which the great mother mind holds to her knee her most capricious and her most colossal children. Let us look at this brood of giants in an ascending scale of intellectual precedence, fastening first on those who are nearest the common heart and represent most exclusively the character of the nation's general mind. Foremost among these is Sir Edward Coke, the leviathan of the common law, and the sublime of common sense, — a man who could have been produced only by the slow gestation of centuries, English in bone and blood and brain. Stout as an oak, though capable of being yielding as a willow; with an intellect tough, fibrous, holding with a Titanic clutch its enormity of acquisition; with a disposition hard, arrogant, obstinate, just; and with a heart avaricious of wealth and power, scorning all weak and

most amiable emotions, but clinging, in spite of its selfish fits and starts of servility, to English laws, customs, and liberties, with the tenacity of mingled instinct and passion; the man looms up before us, rude, ungenerous, and revengeful, as when he insulted Bacon in his abasement, and roared out "spider of hell" to Raleigh in his unjust impeachment, yet rarely losing that stiff, daring spirit which drafted the immortal "Petition of Right," and that sour and sullen honesty which told the messenger of James I., who came to command him to prejudge a case in which the king's prerogative was concerned, "when the case happens, I shall do that which will be fit for a judge to do." Less hard, equally brave, and more genial, Chief Justice Holt stands before us, with his English force of understanding, sagacity of insight, fidelity to facts, and fear of nothing but — the tongue of Lady Holt; wise, and with a slight conceit of his wisdom; a man who has no doubts that laws should be executed and that rogues should be hanged, and before the shrewd glance of whose knowing eye sophism instantly dwindles, and all the bubbles of fanaticism incontinently collapse. Thus he once committed a blasphemous impostor by the name of Atkins, who belonged to a sect, half cheats, half gulls, called "The Prophets." One of the brother-

hood immediately waited on him and said authoritatively, "I come to you, a prophet from the Lord God, who has sent me to thee, and would have thee grant a *nolle prosequi* to John Atkins, his servant, whom thou hast sent to prison." Such a demand might have puzzled some judges, but Holt's grim humor and English sagacity darted at once to the point which betrayed the falsity of the fanatic's claim. "Thou art a false prophet and lying knave," he answered. "If the Lord God had sent thee, it would have been to the Attorney-General, for He knows that it belongeth not to the Chief Justice to grant a *nolle prosequi*. But I, as Chief Justice, can grant you a warrant to bear him company," — which, it is unnecessary to add, he immediately did. The masculine spirit of Coke and Holt is visible in all the great English lawyers and magistrates, refined into a graceful firmness in Hardwicke, caricatured in the bluff, huffing, swearing imperiousness of Thurlow, and finding in Eldon, who combined Thurlow's bigotry with Hardwicke's courtesy, its latest representative.

In respect to the statesmen of England, we will pass over many small, sharp, snapping minds, eminent as red-tape officials and ministers of routine, and many commanding intellects and men versed in affairs, in order that we may the more emphasize the

name of Chatham, who, though it was said of him that he knew nothing perfectly but Barrow's Sermons and Spenser's Faerie Queene, is pre-eminent among English statesmen for the union of the intensest nationality with the most thoroughgoing force of imagination and grandest elevation of sentiment. Feeling the glory and the might of his country throbbing in every pulsation of his heroic heart, he was himself the nation individualized, could wield all its resources of spirit and power, and, while in office, penetrated, animated, kindled, the whole people with his own fiery and invincible soul. As a statesman, he neither had comprehension of understanding nor the timidity in action which often accompanies it; but, a hero and a man of genius, he was fertile in great conceptions, destitute of all moral fear, on fire with patriotic enthusiasm. Possessing a clear and bright vision of some distant and fascinating, but seemingly inaccessible object, and bearing down all opposition with a will as full of the heat of his genius as his conception was with its light, he went crashing through all intervening obstacles right to his mark, and then proudly pointed to his success in justification of his processes. In a lower sphere of action, and with a patriotism less ideal, but still glorious with the beautiful audacity and vivid vision of genius, is that most

heroic of English naval commanders, Nelson. Bearing in his brain an original plan of attack, and flashing his own soul into the roughest sailor at the guns, fleet after fleet sunk or dispersed as they came into collision with that indomitable valor guided by that swift, sure, far-darting mind. His heroism, however, was pervaded through and through with the vulgarest prejudices of the common English seaman. His three orders to his men when he took the command on the opening of the French war sound like the voice of England herself; first, "to obey orders implicitly; second, to consider every man their enemy who spoke ill of the King; and, third, to hate a Frenchman as they did the Devil."

In ascending from men eminent in action to men renowned in thought, we are almost overwhelmed by the thick throng of names, illustrious in scientific discovery and literary creation, which crowd upon the attention. Leaving out of view the mass of originating genius which has been drawn into the service of the nation's applying talent, in the vast field of its industrial labors, what a proof of the richness, depth, strength, variety, and *unity* of the English Mind is revealed in its literature alone. This bears the impress of the same nationality which characterizes its manners and institutions, but a

nationality more or less refined, ennobled, and exalted. If we observe the long line of its poets, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Dryden, Pope, Byron, with hardly the exceptions of Spenser, Milton, and Wordsworth, we shall find that, however exalted, divinized, some of them may be in imagination and sentiment, and however palpable may be the elements of thought they have assimilated directly from visible nature or other literatures, they still all rest on the solid base of English character, all partake of the tough English force,

> "And of that fibre, quick and strong,
> Whose throbs are love, whose thrills are song."

Though they shoot up from the level English mind to almost starry heights, their feet are always firm on English ground. Their ideal elevation is ever significant of the tremendous breadth and vigor of their actual characters. Mountain peaks that cleave the air of another world, with heaven's most purple glories playing on their summits, their broad foundations are still immovably fixed on the earth. It is, as the poet says of the Alps, "Earth climbing to heaven." This reality of manhood gives body and human interest to their loftiest ecstasies of creative passion, for the superlative is ever vitalized by the positive force which urges it up, and never mimics

the crazy fancy of Oriental exaggeration. When to the impassioned imagination of Shakespeare's lover the eyes of his mistress became "lights that do mislead the Morn," we have a more than Oriental extravagance; but in the shock of sweet surprise it gives our spirits there is no feeling of the unnatural or the bizarre.

Observe, again, that portion of English literature which relates to the truisms and the problems of morality, philosophy, and religion. Now, no didactic writing in the world is so parched and mechanical as the English, as long as it deals dryly with generalities; but the moment a gush of thought comes charged with the forces of character, truisms instantly freshen into truths, and the page is all alive and inundated with meaning. Dr. Johnson is sometimes, with cruel irony, called "the great English moralist," in which capacity he is often the most stupendously tiresome of all moralizing word-pilers; but Dr. Johnson, the high-churchman and Jacobite, pouring out his mingled tide of reflection and prejudice, hating Whigs, snarling at Milton, and saying "You lie, sir," to an opponent, is as racy as Montaigne or Swift. Ascending higher into the region of English philosophy, we shall find that the peculiarity of the great English thinker is, that he grapples a subject, not with his

understanding alone, but with his whole nature, extends the empire of the concrete into the region of pure speculation, and, unlike the German and Frenchman, builds not on abstractions, but on conceptions which are o'erinformed with his individual life and experience. Hobbes and Locke, in their metaphysics, draw their own portraits as unmistakably as Milton and Wordsworth do theirs in their poetry. This peculiarity tends to make all English thought relative, but what it loses in universality it more than gains in energy, in closeness to things, and in power to kindle thought in all minds brought within its influence. The exception to this statement, as far as regards universality, is found in that puzzle of critical science, "Nature's darling" and marvel, Shakespeare, who, while he comprehends England, is not comprehended by it, but stands, in some degree, not only for English but for modern thought; and perhaps Bacon's capacious and beneficent intellect, whether we consider the ethical richness of its tone or the beautiful comprehensiveness of its germinating maxims, can hardly be deemed, to use his own insular image, "an island cut off from other men's lands, but rather a continent that joins to them." Still, accepting generally those limitations of English thought which result from its intense vitality and nationality, we are not likely

to mourn much over its relative narrowness, if we place it by the side of the barren amplitude, or ample barrenness, of abstract thinking. Take, for example, any great logician, with his mastery of logical *processes*, and compare him with a really great reasoner of the wide, conceptive genius of Hooker, or Chillingworth, or Barrow, or Burke, with *his* mastery of logical *premises*, and, in respect to mental enlightenment alone, do you not suppose that the clean and clear, but unproductive understanding of the passionless dialectician will quickly dwindle before the massive nature of the creative thinker? The fabrics of reason, indeed, require not only machinery but materials.

As a consequence of this ready interchange of reflective and creative reason in the instinctive operation of the English mind, its poets are philosophers, and its philosophers are poets. The old English drama, from its stout beginning in Marlowe's "consistent mightiness" and "working words," until it melted in the flushed, wild-eyed voluptuousness of Fletcher's fancy, and again hardened in the sensualized sense of Wycherley's satire and the diamond glitter of Congreve's wit, is all aglow with the fire and fierceness of impassioned reason. Dryden argues in annihilating sarcasms and radiant metaphors; Pope

runs ethics into rhythm and epigrams. In the religious poets of the school of Herbert and Vaughan, a curious eye is continually seen peering into the dusky corners of insoluble problems, and metaphysic niceties are vitally inwrought with the holy quaintness of their meditations, and the wild-rose perfume of their sentiments; and, in the present century, the knottiest problems of philosophy have come to us touched and irradiated with the ethereal imaginations of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Coleridge, or shot passionately out from the hot heart of Byron.

But, reluctantly leaving themes which might tempt to wearying digressions, we wish to add a word or two respecting the mental characteristics of four men who are pre-eminently the glory of the English intellect, — Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Newton; and if the human mind contains more wondrous faculties than these exhibit, we know them not. The essential quality of Chaucer is the deep, penetrating, Dantean intensity of his single conceptions, which go right to the heart of the objects conceived, so that there is an absolute contact of thought and thing without any interval. These conceptions, however, he gives in succession, not in combination; and the supreme greatness of Shakespeare's almost celestial strength is seen in this, that while he conceives as

intensely as Chaucer, he has the further power of combining diverse conceptions into a complex whole, "vital in every part," and of flashing the marvellous combination at once upon the mind in words that are things. Milton does not possess this poetic comprehensiveness of conception and combination; but he stands before us as perhaps the grandest and mightiest individual man in literature, — a man who transmuted all thoughts, passions, acquisitions, and aspirations into the indestructible substance of personal character. Assimilating and absorbing into his own nature the spirit of English Puritanism, he starts from a firm and strong, though somewhat narrow base; but, like an inverted pyramid, he broadens as he ascends, and soars at last into regions so exalted and so holy that his song becomes, in his own divine words, "the majestic image of a high and stately drama, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies!" It would not become us here to speak of Newton, — although, in the exhaustless creativeness of his imagination, few poets have equalled him, — except to note the union in his colossal character of boundless inventiveness with an austere English constancy to the object in view. His mind, when on the trail of discovery, was infinitely fertile in the

most original and ingenious guesses, conjectures, and hypotheses, and his life might have been barren of scientific results had he yielded himself to their soft fascination; but in that great, calm mind they were tested and discarded with the same rapid ease that marked their conception; and the persistent Genius, pitched far beyond the outmost walls of positive knowledge,

"Went sounding on its dim and perilous way!"

In these remarks on the English Mind, with their insufficient analysis of incomplete examples, and the result, it may be, of a most "scattering and unsure observance," we have at least endeavored to follow it as it creeps, and catch a vanishing view of it as it soars, without subjecting the facts of its organic life to any misleading rhetorical exaggeration or embellishment. We have attempted the description of this transcendent star in the constellation of nationalities, as we would describe any of those great products of nature whose justification is found in their existence. Yet we are painfully aware how futile is the effort to sketch in a short essay characteristics which have taken ten centuries of the energies of a nation to evolve; but, speaking to those who know something by descent and experience of the virtues and the vices of the English blood, we may have hinted what

we could not represent. For this proud and practical, this arrogant and insular England,

"Whose shores beat back the ocean's foamy feet,"

is the august mother of nations destined to survive her; has sown, by her bigotry and rapacity, no less than her enterprise, the seeds of empires all over the earth; and from the English Mind as its germ has sprung our own somewhat heterogeneous but rapidly organizing American Mind, worthy, as we think, of its parentage, and intended, as we trust, for a loftier and more comprehensive dominion; distinguished, unlike the English, by a mental hospitality which eagerly receives, and a mental energy which quickly assimilates, the blended life-streams of various nationalities; with a genius less persistent, but more sensitive and flexible; with a freedom less local; with ideas larger and more generous; with a past, it may be, less rich in memories, but with a future more glorious in hopes.

VII.

THACKERAY.

THE death of Thackeray has elicited from the press both of England and the United States a series of warm testimonials to the genius of the writer and the character of the man. The majority of them bear the marks of proceeding from personal friends or acquaintances, and the majority of them resent with special heat the imputation that the object of their eulogy was, in any respect, a cynic. A shrewd suspicion arises that such agreement in selecting the topic of defence indicates an uneasy consciousness of a similar agreement, in the reading public, as to the justice of the charge. If this were so, we should think the question was settled against the eulogists. As the inmost individuality of a man of genius inevitably escapes in his writings, and as the multitude of readers judge of him by the general impression his works have left on their minds, their intelligent verdict in regard to his real disposition and nature carries with it more authority than the

testimony of his chance companions. Acres of evidence concerning the correct life and benevolent feelings of Smollett and Wieland can blind no discerning eye to the palpable fact that sensuality and misanthropy entered largely into the composition of the author of "Roderick Random," and that a profound disbelief in what commonly goes under the name of virtue, and a delight in toying with voluptuous images, characterized the historian of "Agathon." The world has little to do with the outward life a man of genius privately leads, in comparison with the inward life he universally diffuses; and an author who contrives to impress fair-minded readers that his mind is tainted with cynical views of man and society, can hardly pass as a genial lover of his race on the strength of certificates that he has performed individual acts of kindness and good-will. The question relates to the kind of influence he exercises on those he has never seen or known. What this influence is, in the case of Thackeray, we by no means think is expressed in so blunt and rough a term as "cynical," and those who use it must be aware that it but coarsely conveys the notion they have of the individuality of the writer they seek to characterize. But clear perceptions often exist in persons who lack the power, or shirk the labor, of giving exact

definitions; and among the readers of Thackeray who quietly take in the subtile essence of his personality, there is less disagreement in their impressions than in their statements. To give what seems to us a fair transcript of the general feeling respecting the writer and the man will be the object of the present paper.

And, first, to exclude him at once from the class and company of the great masters of characterization, we must speak of his obvious limitations. He is reported to have said of himself, that he "had no head above his eyes"; and a man who has no head above his eyes is not an observer after the fashion of Shakespeare, or Cervantes, or Goethe, or Scott, or even of Fielding. The eye observes only what the mind, the heart, and the imagination are gifted to see; and sight must be reinforced by insight before souls can be discerned as well as manners, ideas as well as objects, realities and relations as well as appearances and accidental connections.

But, without taking an epigram of humorous self-depreciation as the statement of a fact, it is still plain that Thackeray was not a philosopher or a poet, in the sense in which a great novelist or dramatist possesses the qualities of either. He had no conception of causes and principles, no grasp of hu-

man nature, as distinguished from the peculiarities of individuals, no perception of the invisible foundations of visible things, no strictly creative power. The world drifted before his eyes as his stories drift to their conclusion; and as to the meaning or purpose or law of the phenomenon, he neither knew nor sought to know. This peculiar scepticism, the result not of the exercise, but the absence, of philosophical thought, is characteristic of the "Bohemian" view of life; and, among a certain class, whose ideal of wisdom is not so much to know as to be "knowing," this ignorant indifference to principles is one of Thackeray's chief claims to distinction. His philosophy is the vanity of all things, and the enjoyment of as many as you can. His superficiality in this respect is evident the moment we pass to some dramatist or novelist who seizes the substance of human nature and human life, and represents things in their vital relations, instead of in the mechanical juxtaposition in which they "happen" to be observed. Shakespeare's plot, for example, is a combination of events; Thackeray's story, a mere procession of incidents. Shakespeare knew woman as well as women, and created Cleopatra and Cordelia; Thackeray sharply scrutinized a certain number of women, and fashioned Becky Sharp and Amelia. The gulf be-

tween the two writers, in respect to naturalness, to a knowledge of human nature, and to individual characterizations, is as wide as that which yawned between Lazarus and Dives. They never can be brought into the same class, without a flippant and heedless oversight of the distinction between kinds of genius, and of their different positions in the sliding-scale of minds.

Connected with this lack of high thought and imagination, is a lack of great passions, and an absence of sympathy with them in life. They are outside of Thackeray's world. When he touches on them, it is with a fleer of incredulity: he has a suspicion of private theatricals; he is curious to see the dressing for the part; he keeps a bright lookout to detect the stage-strut in the hero's stride, and ironically encores the impassioned declamation. In nothing does he better succeed in taking the romance from life, than in this oversight of the reality of great passions in his quick penetration through all the masks of their imitators. He is so bent on stripping the king's robes from the limbs of the thief, that he has lost the sense of kingly natures. His world is, to a great extent, a world in which the grand and the noble are "left out in the cold," and the prominence given to the mean and the common. He takes the

real heart and vitality out of mankind, calls what remains by the name of human nature, and adopts a theory of life which makes all history impossible, — except the "History of Pendennis." An amusing illustration of this defect is observable in one of his "Roundabout Papers," written during the Confederate Rebellion. He had travelled all over the United States with the sharpest eye that any tourist ever brought with him across the Atlantic; but he saw nothing of the essential character of the people, and he could not for the life of him imagine, after his return, why we went to war. While North and South were engaged in their fierce death-grapple, he had no perception of the ideas at stake, or the passions in operation. He took a kindly view of both parties in the contest. "How hospitable they were, those Southern men!" They gave him excellent claret in New Orleans. "Find me," he says, "speaking ill of such a country!" A Southern acquaintance sent him a case of Medoc, just as he was starting for a voyage up the Mississippi. "Where are you," he exclaims, "honest friends, who gave me of your kindness and your cheer? May I be considerably boiled, blown up, and snagged, if I speak hard words of you. May claret turn sour ere I do!" This may be geniality, but it is the geniality of in-

difference to great things. A nation in its death-throes, — one side passionately battling for the most gigantic of shams as well as iniquities, — the land flooded with blood, — and still the good-natured "delineator of human nature" utterly unable to account for the strange phenomena, is only sure that the Southerners cannot be so bad and wrong as they are represented, for did they not give him "that excellent light claret"?

Another defect of Thackeray, and the consequence of those we have mentioned, is the limitation of the range of his observation and the comparative poverty of his materials. Because he confines himself to the delineation of actual life, he is sometimes absurdly considered to include it, when, in fact, he only includes a portion, and that a relatively small portion. A man may have a wide experience of the world without knowing experimentally much of Thackeray's world; and those whose knowledge of the world is chiefly confined to what they obtain from the novelists of manners and society, soon learn that Thackeray's predecessors and Thackeray's contemporaries contain much which Thackeray overlooks. He is only one of a large number of observers, each with a special aptitude for some particular province of actual life, each repairing certain deficiencies of the

others, and all combined falling short of the immense variety of the facts. In his own domain he is a master, but his mastery comes from his keen and original perception of what has been frequently observed before, rather than from his discovery of a new field of observation. After generalizing the knowledge of life and the types of character we have obtained through his writings, we find they are not so much additions to our knowledge as verifications and revivals of it. The form rather than the substance is what is new, and the superficiality of thought underlying the whole representation is often painfully evident. The maxims which may be deduced from the incidents and characters would make but an imperfect manual of practical wisdom.

We now come, by the method of exclusion, to the positive qualities of Thackeray, and to the direction and scope of his powers. Gifted originally with a joyous temperament, a vigorous understanding, a keen sensibility, and a decided, though somewhat indolent self-reliance, he appears, before he came before the world as a writer, to have seen through most of the ordinary forms of human pretension, and to have had a considerable experience of human rascality. He lost a fortune in the process of learning the various vanities, follies, and artifices he afterwards

exposed, and thus may be considered to have fairly earned the right to be their satirist. A man who has been deceived by a hypocrite or cheated by a rogue describes hypocrites and rogues from a sharper insight, and with a keener scorn, than a man who knows them only from the observation of their victims. Truisms brighten into truths, and hearsays into certainties, under the touch of such an artist. As a man's powers are determined in their direction by his materials, — as what he has seen, known, and assimilated becomes a part of his intellect and individuality, — Thackeray obeyed the mere instinct of his genius in becoming the delineator of manners and the satirist of shams. The artificial — sometimes as complicated with the natural, sometimes as entirely overlaying it, sometimes as almost extinguishing it — was the field where his powers could obtain their appropriate exercise. They had indeed grown into powers by the nutriment derived from it, and took to their game as the duck takes to the water. From the worst consequences of this perilous mental direction he was saved by his tenderness of heart, and his love and appreciation of simple, unpretending moral excellence. He never hardened into misanthropy or soured into cynicism. Much of his representation of life is necessarily ungenial, for it is the

representation of the selfish, the dissolute, the hard-hearted, and the worthless. Those who accuse him of cynicism for the manner in which he depicted these must expect a toleration after the fashion of the Regent Duke of Orleans, "who thought," says Macaulay, "that he and his fellow-creatures were Yahoos," but then he thought "the Yahoo was a very agreeable sort of animal." Thackeray's standard of human nature was not high, and his peculiar talent lay in delineating specimens of it lower than his own standard, but the wholesome impulses of his heart taught him when to use the lash and the scourge. The general impression his individuality leaves on the mind is not that of a cynic, but of a sceptic. He takes the world as he finds it; usually treats of it in a tone of good-natured banter; is pleased when he can praise, and often grieved when he is compelled to censure; touches lightly, but surely, on follies, and only kindles into wrath at obdurate selfishness or malignity; hardly thinks the world can be bettered; and dismisses it as something whose ultimate purpose it is impossible to explain. He records that portion which passes under his own microscopic vision, and leaves to others the task of reconciling the facts with accredited theories.

In his earliest works the satirist is predominant

over the humorist. He adopted the almost universal policy of Englishmen who wish to attract public attention, — the policy of assault. Mr. Bull can only be roused into the admission of a writer's ability by feeling the smart of his whip on his hide. Sydney Smith, Macaulay, Carlyle, Kingsley, Ruskin, Thackeray, having something to say to him, began with shrieking out that he was a fool and a rogue; and, thus gaining his ear, proceeded to state their reasons for so injurious an opinion, with a plentiful mixture all the time of opprobrious epithets to prevent a relapse into insensibility. This system naturally tends to make authors exaggerate things out of their relations in order to give immediate effect to their special view, and the habit of indiscriminate assault frequently survives the necessity for its exercise. Thackeray appears at first to have considered that his business was to find fault; to carry into literature the functions of the detective police; to pry into the haunts, and arrest the persons, of scoundrels who evaded the ordinary operations of the law. The most fashionable clubs and drawing-rooms were invaded, to catch scamps whom a common policeman would have sought in low alleys and hells. The successful exposer found a saturnine enjoyment in the confusion and scandal which his ingenuity and per-

tinacity wrought among "respectable" people, and his taste for the sport was naturally increased by its indulgence, and his success in its prosecution. He contracted a morbid liking for tainted character, and his sharp glance and fine scent were exercised to discover the taint in characters generally sound and healthy. The latent weaknesses, foibles, follies, vices, of the intelligent and good became the objects of his search, somewhat to the exclusion of their nobler and predominant qualities, and the result was, in many instances, wofully partial estimates and exhibitions of men and women. The truth was truth only from the satirist's point of view.

But all these earlier works — "The Yellowplush Correspondence," "The Confessions of Fitz-Boodle," "The Luck of Barry Lyndon," "Men's Wives," "The Book of Snobs," not to mention others — have the one merit of being readable, — a merit which Thackeray never lost. The fascination they exert is in spite of the commonness of their materials. The charm comes from the writer, and his mode of treatment. The wit and the humor, so "bitter-sweet"; the fine fancy and delicate observation; the eye for ludicrous situations; the richness, raciness, and occasional wildness of the comic vein; the subtilty of the unexpected strokes of pathos; the perfect obedi-

ence of the style to the mind it expresses; and the continual presence of the writer himself, making himself the companion of the reader,—gossiping, hinting, sneering, laughing, crying, as the narrative proceeds,—combine to produce an effect which nobody, to say the least, ever found dull. The grace, flexibility, and easy elegance of the style are especially notable. It is utterly without pretension, and partakes of the absolute sincerity of the writer; it is talk in print, seemingly as simple as the most familiar private chat, yet as delicate in its felicities as the most elaborate composition.

In "Vanity Fair," the first novel which gave the author wide celebrity, we have all the qualities we have noticed cast into the frame of a story,—a story which has a more connected interest and a more elastic movement than its successors, though we cannot think that it equals some of them in general power of thought, observation, and characterization. The moral, if moral it have, is that the Amelias of the world, with all their simplicity and ignorance, will, in the long run, succeed better than the Becky Sharps, with all their evil knowledge and selfish acuteness. Amelia is evidently as much the favorite of the author's heart as Becky is of his brain, and he has expended nearly as much skill in the delinea-

tion of the one as of the other. The public, however, was prepared for the first, but the second took it by surprise. It was the most original female character of its kind that had appeared in contemporary fiction, and the raciness and never-faltering courage with which the character was developed, through all the phases of her career, seemed an insult to the sex. "Cynic!" cried the ladies. The truth, in this case, was the cause of offence. The Sharps wisely held their tongues, and left the denial of the possibility of such a woman to those who had happily never made her acquaintance. Thackeray had evidently seen her, and seen also the Marquis of Steyne. The latter represents a class of titled reprobates in England and on the Continent, whom other novelists have repeatedly attempted to domesticate in the domain of romance, but have failed from ignorance or exaggeration. The peculiarity of the Marquis is that a long life of habitual and various vice has spread a thick scurf over his soul, so that he has lost by degrees all consciousness of the existence of such an organ. Few felons have gone to the gallows or the gibbet with such an oblivion of the immortal part of them as this noble Marquis exhibits in going to his daily dissoluteness and depravity. The character is in some respects a horrible one, but it is probably

true. Shakespeare makes Emilia wish that the "pernicious soul" of Iago "may rot half a grain a day"; and it would certainly seem that the soul may, by a course of systematic and cynical depravity, be completely covered up, if it may not be gradually consumed.

"The History of Pendennis" has more variety of character, and more minute analysis of feeling, than "Vanity Fair," but the story drifts and drags. Though Mrs. Pendennis and Laura rank high among Thackeray's good women, his genius is specially seen in Blanche Amory, a most perfect and masterly exhibition of the union of selfishness and malice with sentimentality, resulting, as it seems to us, in a character more wicked and heartless than that of Becky Sharp. Major Pendennis and she carry off the honors of the book, — a book which, with all its wealth of wit, humor, and worldly knowledge, still leaves the saddest impression on the mind of all of Thackeray's works. It is enjoyed while we are engaged in reading its many-peopled pages; the separate scenes and incidents are full of matter; but it wants unity and purpose, and the wide information of the superficies of life it conveys is of the kind which depresses rather than exhilarates. The gloss is altogether taken both from literature and society, and

the subtile scepticism of the author's view of life is destructive of those illusions which are beneficent, as well as of those delusions which are mischievous. There are certain habits, prejudices, opinions, and preconceptions, which, though they cannot stand the test of relentless criticism, are still bound up with virtues, and are at some periods of life the conditions both of action and good action. They should be unlearned by experience, if unlearned at all. To begin life with a theoretical disbelief in them, is to anticipate experience at the cost often of destroying ambition and weakening will. Thackeray in this novel gives a great deal of that sort of information which is not practically so good as the ignorance of enthusiasm and the error of faith. We assent as we read, and congratulate ourselves on being so much more knowing than our neighbors; but at the end we find that, while our eyes have been opened, the very sources of volition have been touched with paralysis.

"The History of Henry Esmond" is an attempt to look at the age of Queen Anne through the eyes of a contemporary, and to record the result of the inspection in the style of the period. It is, on the whole, successful. The diction of the book is exquisite; pleasant glimpses are given of the memorable men of the era, — literary, political, and military;

and the languid pace with which the story rambles to its conclusion provokes just that tranquil interest with which Esmond himself recalls in memory the incidents of his career. Both persons and scenes have the visionary grace and remoteness which objects take when seen through the thin and shining mist of imaginative recollection. Beatrix Esmond, the heroine, is another of Thackeray's studies in perverted feminine character, and is worthy of the delineator of Becky and Blanche. The picture of the old age of this pernicious beauty, given in "The Virginians," is equally skilful and true. The defect in the plot of "Henry Esmond" is obvious to every reader. Lady Castlewood, whom the author intends to represent as the ideal of a noble woman, loves the lover of her daughter, and is swayed by passions and placed in situations degrading to womanhood; while Esmond himself, put forward as a high-toned gentleman and chivalrous man of honor, is so demoralized by his passion for a jilt, that he enters into a conspiracy to overturn the government, and involve England in civil war, simply to please her, and with a profound disbelief in the cause for which he is to draw his sword. The atrocious villany of such conduct, from which a Marquis of Steyne would have recoiled, appears to Thackeray simply the weakness of a noble nature.

"The Newcomes" is perhaps the most genial of the author's works, and the one which best exhibits the maturity and the range of his powers. It seems written with a pen diamond-pointed, so glittering and incisive is its slightest touch. The leading idea is the necessary unhappiness of marriage without mutual love, no matter what other motive, selfish or generous, may prompt it; and the worldly view of the matter, as contrasted with the romantic, has never been combated with more unanswerable force than by this realist and man of the world. The practical argument loses none of its power by being given in instances, instead of declamations or syllogisms. The sincerity and conscientiousness of Thackeray's mind, and the absence in him of any pretension to emotions he does not feel and ideas he does not believe, are very marked in this book. He has the honesty of a clear-sighted and clear-headed witness on the stand, stating facts as they appear to him, and on the watch to escape being perjured by yielding to the impulses either of amiability or malice. In the versatile characterization of the work, two inimitable personages stand out as the best expression of Thackeray's heart, — Colonel Newcome and Madame de Florac. Ethel Newcome seems to us, on the whole, an ambitious failure, lacking the

usual vitality of the author's feminine characters, and wrought out with set purpose against his grain to show that he could conceive and delineate "a young lady." It is hard for the reader to share Clive's passion for her, for she never arrives in the book to substantial personality. She brings to mind Adam, in the German play, who is represented as passing across the stage, "going to be created." Rosey Mackenzie has infinitely more life. Lady Kew is a good female counterpart of the Marquis of Steyne; Madame d'Ivry is Blanche Amory grown up; Mrs. Mackenzie is petty malice and selfishness personified; and all three are masterpieces in their several kinds. Indeed, the ingenious contrivances of human beings to torment each other were never better set forth than in these "Memoirs of a Respectable Family."

We have no space to do even partial justice to "The Virginians," "Lovel the Widower," and "The Adventures of Philip." Attractive as these are, they furnish no specially novel illustrations of Thackeray's powers, and exhibit no change in the point of view from which he surveyed life. Perhaps as he grew older there was a more obvious desire on his part to appear amiable. He celebrates the kindly virtues. He protests against being called a cynic; condescends to interrupt the course of his story to answer petu-

lant criticisms petulantly; and relaxes somewhat from his manly and resolute tone. The struggle between his feelings and his obstinate intellectual habit of minutely inspecting defects is obvious on his page. He likes good people, yet cannot help indulging in a sly, mischievous cut at their faults, and then seems vexed that he yields to the temptation. His humility is often that of a person who tells his neighbor that he is a fool and then adds, "but so are we all, more or less"; the particular fool pointed out having a dim intuition that the rapid generalization at the end is intended rather to indicate the wisdom of the generalizer than his participation in the universal folly. A covert insult thus lurks under his ostentatious display of charity. And then in his jets of geniality there is something suspicious. He condescends; he slaps on the back; he patronizes in praising; he is benevolent from pity; and, with a light fleer or vanishing touch of sarcasm, he hints that it is a superior intelligence that is thus disporting in the levities of good-fellowship.

One thing remains to be said regarding the collective impression left on the mind by Thackeray's works. That impression, sharply scrutinized, we will venture to say is this, that life as he represents it is life not worth the living. It is doubtless very entertaining to

read about, and it is not without instruction; but who would wish to go through the labor and vexation of leading it? Who would desire to be any one of the characters, good or bad, depicted in it? Who would consider its pleasures and rewards as any compensation for its struggles, disappointments, and disillusions? Who, if called upon to accept existence under its conditions, would not, on the whole, consider existence a bore or a burden, rather than a blessing? This can, we think, be said of no other delineator of human life and human character of equal eminence; and it points to that pervading scepticism, in Thackeray's mind, which is felt to be infused into the inmost substance of his works. Deficient in those qualities and beliefs which convey inspiration as well as information, which impart heat to the will as well as light to the intellect, — lacking the insight of principles and the experience of great passions and uplifting sentiments, — his representation even of the actual world excludes the grand forces which really animate and move it, and thus ignores those deeper elements which give to life earnestness, purpose, and glow.

VIII.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.*

THE romance of "The Marble Faun" will be widely welcomed, not only for its intrinsic merits, but because it is a sign that its writer, after a silence of seven or eight years, has determined to resume his place in the ranks of authorship. In his Preface he tells us, that in each of his previous publications he had unconsciously one person in his eye, whom he styles his "gentle reader." He meant it "for that one congenial friend, more comprehensive of his purposes, more appreciative of his success, more indulgent of his shortcomings, and, in all respects, closer and kinder than a brother, — that all-sympathizing critic, in short, whom an author never actually meets, but to whom he implicitly makes his appeal, whenever he is conscious of having done his best." He believes that this reader did once exist for him, and duly received the scrolls he flung "upon

* The Marble Faun ; or the Romance of Monte Beni. By NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE. Boston, 1860.

whatever wind was blowing, in the faith that they would find him out." "But," he questions, "is he extant now? In these many years since he last heard from me, may he not have deemed his earthly task accomplished, and have withdrawn to the paradise of gentle readers, wherever it may be, to the enjoyments of which his kindly charity on my behalf must surely have entitled him?" As, however, Hawthorne's reputation has been steadily growing with the lapse of time, he has no cause to fear that the longevity of his gentle reader will not equal his own.

The publication of this new romance seems to offer us a fitting occasion to attempt some description of the peculiarities of the genius of which it is the latest offspring, and to hazard some judgments on its predecessors. It is more than twenty-five years since Hawthorne began that remarkable series of stories and essays which are now collected in the volumes of "Twice-Told Tales," "The Snow Image and other Tales," and "Mosses from an Old Manse." From the first he was recognized, by such readers as he chanced to find, as a man of genius; yet for a long time he enjoyed, in his own words, the distinction of being "the obscurest man of letters in America." His readers were "gentle" rather than enthusiastic; their

fine delight in his creations was an individual perception of subtile excellences of thought and style, too refined and self-satisfying to be contagious; and the public was untouched, whilst the "gentle" reader was full of placid enjoyment. Indeed, we fear that this kind of reader is something of an Epicurean, welcoming a new genius as a private blessing, sent by a benign Providence to quicken a new life in his somewhat jaded sense of intellectual pleasure; and that, after having received a fresh sensation, he is apt to be serenely indifferent whether the creator of it starve bodily or pine mentally from the lack of a cordial human shout of recognition.

There would appear, on a slight view of the matter, to be no reason for the little notice which Hawthorne's early productions received. The subjects were mostly drawn from the traditions and written records of New England, and gave the "beautiful strangeness" of imagination to objects, incidents, and characters which were familiar facts in the popular mind. The style, while it had a purity, sweetness, and grace which satisfied the most fastidious and exacting taste, had, at the same time, more than the simplicity and clearness of an ordinary school-book. But, though the subjects and the style were thus popular, there was something in the shaping and informing

spirit which failed to awaken interest, or awakened interest without exciting delight. Misanthropy, when it has its source in passion, — when it is fierce, bitter, fiery, and scornful, — when it vigorously echoes the aggressive discontent of the world, and furiously tramples on the institutions and the men, luckily rather than rightfully, in the ascendant, — this is always popular; but a misanthropy which springs from insight, — a misanthropy which is lounging, languid, sad, and depressing, — a misanthropy which remorselessly looks through cursing misanthropes and chirping men of the world with the same sure, detecting glance of reason, — a misanthropy which has no fanaticism, and which casts the same ominous doubt on subjectively morbid as on subjectively moral action, — a misanthropy which has no respect for impulses, but has a terrible perception of spiritual laws, — this is a misanthropy which can expect no wide recognition; and it would be vain to deny that traces of this kind of misanthropy are to be found in Hawthorne's earlier, and are not altogether absent from his later works. He had spiritual insight, but it did not penetrate to the sources of spiritual joy; and his deepest glimpses of truth were calculated rather to sadden than to inspire. A blandly sceptical distrust of human nature was the result of his most piercing

glances into the human soul. He had humor, and sometimes humor of a delicious kind; but this sunshine of the soul was but sunshine breaking through, or lighting up, a sombre and ominous cloud. There was also observable in his earlier stories a lack of vigor, as if the power of his will had been impaired by the very process which gave depth and excursiveness to his mental vision. Throughout, the impression is conveyed of a shy recluse, alternately bashful in disposition and bold in thought, gifted with original and various capacities, but capacities which seemed to have been developed in the shade. Shakespeare calls moonlight the sunlight *sick;* and it is in some such moonlight of the mind that the genius of Hawthorne found its first expression. A mild melancholy, sometimes deepening into gloom, sometimes brightening into a "humorous sadness," characterized his early creations. Like his own Hepzibah Pyncheon, he appeared "to be walking in a dream"; or rather, the life and reality assumed by his emotions "made all outward occurrences unsubstantial, like the teasing phantasms of an unconscious slumber." Though dealing largely in description, and with the most accurate perceptions of outward objects, he still, to use again his own words, gives the impression of a man "chiefly accustomed to look inward, and

to whom external matters are of little value or import, unless they bear relation to something within his own mind." But that "something within his own mind" was often an unpleasant something, — perhaps a ghastly occult perception of deformity and sin in what appeared outwardly fair and good; so that the reader felt a secret dissatisfaction with the disposition which directed the genius, even in the homage he awarded to the genius itself. As psychological portraits of morbid natures, his delineations of character might have given a purely intellectual satisfaction; but there was audible, to the delicate ear, a faint and muffled growl of personal discontent, which showed they were not mere exercises of penetrating imaginative analysis, but had in them the morbid vitality of a despondent mood.

Yet, after admitting these peculiarities, nobody who is now drawn to the "Twice-Told Tales," from his interest in the later romances of Hawthorne, can fail to wonder a little at the limited number of readers they attracted on their original publication; for many of these stories are at once a representation of early New England life and a criticism of it. They have much in them of the deepest truth of history. "The Legends of the Province House," "The Gray Champion," "The Gentle Boy," "The Minister's Black

Veil," "Endicott and the Red Cross," not to mention others, contain important matter which cannot be found in Bancroft or even Winthrop. They exhibit the inward struggles of New England men and women with some of the darkest problems of existence, and have more vital import to thoughtful minds than the records of Indian or Revolutionary warfare. In the "Prophetic Pictures," "Fancy's Show-Box," "The Great Carbuncle," "The Haunted Mind," and "Edward Fane's Rose-Bud," there are flashes of moral insight, which light up, for the moment, the darkest recesses of the individual mind; and few sermons reach to the depth of thought and sentiment from which these seemingly airy sketches draw their sombre life. It is common, for instance, for religious moralists to insist on the great spiritual truth, that wicked thoughts and impulses, which circumstances prevent from passing into wicked acts, are still deeds in the sight of God; but the living truth subsides into a dead truism, as enforced by commonplace preachers. In "Fancy's Show-Box," Hawthorne seizes the prolific idea; and the respectable merchant and respected church-member, in the still hour of his own meditations, convicts himself of being a liar, cheat, thief, seducer, and murderer, as he casts his glance over the mental events which form

his spiritual biography. Interspersed with serious histories and moralities like these are others which embody the sweet and playful, though still thoughtful and slightly saturnine action of Hawthorne's mind, — like "The Seven Vagabonds," "Snow-Flakes," "The Lily's Quest," "Mr. Higgenbotham's Catastrophe," "Little Annie's Ramble," "Sights from a Steeple," "Sunday at Home," and "A Rill from the Town-Pump."

The "Mosses from an Old Manse" are intellectually and artistically much superior to the "Twice-Told Tales." The twenty-three stories and essays which make up the volumes are almost perfect of their kind. Each is complete in itself, and many might be expanded into long romances by the simple method of developing the possibilities of their shadowy types of character into appropriate incidents. In description, narration, allegory, humor, reason, fancy, subtilty, inventiveness, they exceed the best productions of Addison; but they want Addison's sensuous contentment, and sweet and kindly spirit. Though the author denies that he has exhibited his own individual attributes in these "Mosses," though he professes not to be "one of those supremely hospitable people who serve up their own hearts delicately fried, with brain-sauce, as a titbit for their

beloved public," — yet it is none the less apparent that he has diffused through each tale and sketch the life of the mental mood to which it owed its existence, and that one individuality pervades and colors the whole collection. The defect of the serious stories is, that character is introduced, not as thinking, but as the illustration of thought. The persons are ghostly, with a sad lack of flesh and blood. They are phantasmal symbols of a meditative and imaginative analysis of human passions and aspirations. The dialogue, especially, is bookish, as though the personages knew their speech was to be printed, and were careful of the collocation and cadence of their words. The author throughout is evidently more interested in his large, wide, deep, indolently serene, and lazily sure and critical view of the conflict of ideas and passions, than he is with the individuals who embody them. He shows moral insight without moral earnestness. He cannot contract his mind to the patient delineation of a moral individual, but attempts to use individuals in order to express the last results of patient moral perception. Young Goodman Brown and Roger Malvin are not persons; they are the mere loose, personal expression of subtile thinking. "The Celestial Railroad," "The Procession of Life," "Earth's Holocaust,"

"The Bosom Serpent," indicate thought of a character equally deep, delicate, and comprehensive; but the characters are ghosts of men rather than substantial individualities. In the "Mosses from an Old Manse," we are really studying the phenomena of human nature, while, for the time, we beguile ourselves into the belief that we are following the fortunes of individual natures.

Up to this time, the writings of Hawthorne conveyed the impression of a genius in which insight so dominated over impulse that it was rather mentally and morally curious than mentally and morally impassioned. The quality evidently wanting to its full expression was intensity. In the romance of "The Scarlet Letter" he first made his genius efficient by penetrating it with passion. This book forced itself into attention by its inherent power; and the author's name, previously known only to a limited circle of readers, suddenly became a familiar word in the mouths of the great reading public of America and England. It may be said that it "captivated" nobody, but took everybody captive. Its power could neither be denied nor resisted. There were growls of disapprobation from novel-readers, that Hester Prynne and the Rev. Mr. Dimmesdale were subjected to cruel punishments unknown to the juris-

prudence of fiction, — that the author was an inquisitor who put his victims on the rack, — and that neither amusement nor delight resulted from seeing the contortions and hearing the groans of these martyrs of sin; but the fact was no less plain that Hawthorne had for once compelled the most superficial lovers of romance to submit themselves to the magic of his genius. The readers of Dickens voted him, with three times three, to the presidency of their republic of letters; the readers of Hawthorne were caught by a *coup d'état*, and fretfully submitted to a despot whom they could not depose.

The success of "The Scarlet Letter" is an example of the advantage which an author gains by the simple concentration of his powers on one absorbing subject. In the "Twice-Told Tales" and the "Mosses from an Old Manse" Hawthorne had exhibited a wider range of sight and insight than in "The Scarlet Letter." Indeed, in the little sketch of "Endicott and the Red Cross," written twenty years before, he had included in a few sentences the whole matter which he afterwards treated in his famous story. In describing the various inhabitants of an early New England town, as far as they were representative, he touched incidentally on a "young woman, with no mean share of beauty, whose doom it was to

wear the letter A on the breast of her gown, in the eyes of all the world and her own children. And even her own children knew what that initial signified. Sporting with her infamy, the lost and desperate creature had embroidered the fatal token in scarlet cloth, with golden thread and the nicest art of needlework; so that the capital A might have been thought to mean Admirable, or anything, rather than Adulteress." Here is the germ of the whole pathos and terror of "The Scarlet Letter"; but it is hardly noted in the throng of symbols, equally pertinent, in the few pages of the little sketch from which we have quoted.

Two characteristics of Hawthorne's genius stand plainly out in the conduct and characterization of the romance of "The Scarlet Letter," which were less obviously prominent in his previous works. The first relates to his subordination of external incidents to inward events. Mr. James's "solitary horseman" does more in one chapter than Hawthorne's hero in twenty chapters; but then James deals with the arms of men, while Hawthorne deals with their souls. Hawthorne relies almost entirely for the interest of his story on what is felt and done within the minds of his characters. Even his most picturesque descriptions and narratives are only one tenth matter to

nine tenths spirit. The results that follow from one external act of folly or crime are to him enough for an Iliad of woes. It might be supposed that his whole theory of Romantic Art was based on these tremendous lines of Wordsworth: —

> "Action is momentary, —
> The motion of a muscle, this way or that:
> Suffering is long, obscure, and infinite."

The second characteristic of his genius is connected with the first. With his insight of individual souls he combines a far deeper insight of the spiritual laws which govern the strangest aberrations of individual souls. But it seems to us that his mental eye, keen-sighted and far-sighted as it is, overlooks the merciful modifications of the austere code whose pitiless action it so clearly discerns. In his long and patient brooding over the spiritual phenomena of Puritan life, it is apparent, to the least critical observer, that he has imbibed a deep personal antipathy to the Puritanic ideal of character; but it is no less apparent that his intellect and imagination have been strangely fascinated by the Puritanic idea of justice. His brain has been subtly infected by the Puritanic perception of Law, without being warmed by the Puritanic faith in Grace. Individually, he would much prefer to have been one of his own "Seven

Vagabonds" rather than one of the austerest preachers of the primitive church of New England; but the austerest preacher of the primitive church of New England would have been more tender and considerate to a real Mr. Dimmesdale and a real Hester Prynne than this modern romancer has been to their typical representatives in the world of imagination. Throughout "The Scarlet Letter" we seem to be following the guidance of an author who is personally good-natured, but intellectually and morally relentless.

"The House of the Seven Gables," Hawthorne's next work, while it has less concentration of passion and tension of mind than "The Scarlet Letter," includes a wider range of observation, reflection, and character; and the morality, dreadful as fate, which hung like a black cloud over the personages of the previous story, is exhibited in more relief. Although the book has no imaginative creation equal to little Pearl, it still contains numerous examples of characterization at once delicate and deep. Clifford, especially, is a study in psychology, as well as a marvellously subtile delineation of enfeebled manhood. The general idea of the story is this, — "that the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones, and, divesting itself of every temporary advantage, becomes a pure and uncontrol-

lable mischief"; and the mode in which this idea is carried out shows great force, fertility, and refinement of mind. A weird fancy, sporting with the facts detected by a keen observation, gives to every gable of the Seven Gables, every room in the House, every burdock growing rankly before the door, a symbolic significance. The queer mansion is haunted, — haunted with thoughts which every moment are liable to take ghostly shape. All the Pyncheons who have resided in it appear to have infected the very timbers and walls with the spiritual essence of their lives, and each seems ready to pass from a memory into a presence. The stern theory of the author regarding the hereditary transmission of family qualities, and the visiting of the sins of the fathers on the heads of their children, almost wins our reluctant assent through the pertinacity with which the generations of the Pyncheon race are made not merely to live in the blood and brain of their descendants, but to cling to their old abiding-place on earth, so that to inhabit the house is to breathe the Pyncheon soul and assimilate the Pyncheon individuality. The whole representation, masterly as it is, considered as an effort of intellectual and imaginative power, would still be morally bleak, were it not for the sunshine and warmth radiated from the

character of Phœbe. In this delightful creation, Hawthorne for once gives himself up to homely human nature, and has succeeded in delineating a New England girl, cheerful, blooming, practical, affectionate, efficient, full of innocence and happiness, with all the "handiness" and native sagacity of her class, and so true and close to nature that the process by which she is slightly idealized is completely hidden.

In this romance there is also more humor than in any of his other works. It peeps out, even in the most serious passages, in a kind of demure rebellion against the fanaticism of his remorseless intelligence. In the description of the Pyncheon poultry, which we think unexcelled by anything in Dickens for quaintly fanciful humor, the author seems to indulge in a sort of parody of his own doctrine of the hereditary transmission of family qualities. At any rate, that strutting chanticleer, with his two meagre wives and one wizened chicken, is a sly side fleer at the tragic aspect of the law of descent. Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon, her shop, and her customers, are so delightful, that the reader would willingly spare a good deal of Clifford and Judge Pyncheon and Holgrave, for more details of them and Phœbe. Uncle Venner, also, the old wood-sawyer, who boasts

"that he has seen a good deal of the world, not only in people's kitchens and back-yards, but at the street-corners, and on the wharves, and in other places where his business" called him, and who, on the strength of this comprehensive experience, feels qualified to give the final decision in every case which tasks the resources of human wisdom, is a very much more humane and interesting gentleman than the Judge. Indeed, one cannot but regret that Hawthorne should be so economical of his undoubted stores of humor, and that, in the two romances he has since written, humor, in the form of character, does not appear at all.

Before proceeding to the consideration of "The Blithedale Romance," it is necessary to say a few words on the seeming separation of Hawthorne's genius from his will. He has none of that ability which enabled Scott and enables Dickens to force their powers into action, and to make what was begun in drudgery soon assume the character of inspiration. Hawthorne cannot thus use his genius; his genius always uses him. This is so true, that he often succeeds better in what calls forth his personal antipathies than in what calls forth his personal sympathies. His Life of General Pierce, for instance, is altogether destitute of life; yet in writ-

ing it he must have exerted himself to the utmost, as his object was to urge the claims of an old and dear friend to the Presidency of the Republic. The style, of course, is excellent, as it is impossible for Hawthorne to write bad English; but the genius of the man has deserted him. General Pierce, whom he loves, he draws so feebly, that one doubts, while reading the biography, if such a man exists; Hollingsworth, whom he hates, is so vividly characterized, that the doubt is, while we read the romance, whether such a man can possibly be fictitious.

Midway between such a work as the "Life of General Pierce" and "The Scarlet Letter" may be placed "The Wonder-Book" and "Tanglewood Tales." In these Hawthorne's genius distinctly appears, and appears in its most lovable, though not in its deepest form. These delicious stories, founded on the mythology of Greece, were written for children, but they delight men and women as well. Hawthorne never pleases grown people so much as when he writes with an eye to the enjoyment of little people.

Now "The Blithedale Romance" is far from being so pleasing a performance as "Tanglewood Tales," yet it very much better illustrates the operation, indicates the quality, and expresses the power, of the author's genius. His great books appear not so

much created by him as through him. They have the character of revelations, — he, the instrument, being often troubled with the burden they impose on his mind. His profoundest glances into individual souls are like the marvels of clairvoyance. It would seem, that, in the production of such a work as "The Blithedale Romance," his mind had hit accidentally, as it were, on an idea or fact mysteriously related to some morbid sentiment in the inmost core of his nature, and to numerous scattered observations of human life, lying unrelated in his imagination. In a sort of meditative dream, his intellect drifts in the direction to which the subject points, broods patiently over it, looks at it, looks into it, and at last looks through it to the law by which it is governed. Gradually, individual beings, definite in spiritual quality, but shadowy in substantial form, group themselves around this central conception, and by degrees assume an outward body and expression corresponding to their internal nature. On the depth and intensity of the mental mood, the force of the fascination it exerts over him, and the length of time it holds him captive, depend the solidity and substance of the individual characterizations. In this way Miles Coverdale, Hollingsworth, Westervelt, Zenobia, and Priscilla become real persons to the mind which has

called them into being. He knows every secret and watches every motion of their souls, yet is, in a measure, independent of them, and pretends to no authority by which he can alter the destiny which consigns them to misery or happiness. They drift to their doom by the same law by which they drifted across the path of his vision. Individually, he abhors Hollingsworth, and would like to annihilate Westervelt, yet he allows the superb Zenobia to be their victim; and if his readers object that the effect of the whole representation is painful, he will doubtless agree with them, but sorrowfully confess his incapacity honestly to alter a sentence. He professes to tell the story as it was revealed to him; and the license in which a romancer might indulge is denied to a biographer of spirits. Show him a fallacy in his logic of passion and character, point out a false or defective step in his analysis, and he will gladly alter the whole to your satisfaction; but four human souls, such as he has described, being given, their mutual attractions and repulsions will end, he feels assured, in just such a catastrophe as he has stated.

Eight years have passed since "The Blithedale Romance" was written, and during nearly the whole of this period Hawthorne has resided abroad. "The Marble Faun," which must, on the whole, be con-

sidered the greatest of his works, proves that his genius has widened and deepened in this interval, without any alteration or modification of its characteristic merits and characteristic defects. The most obvious excellence of the work is the vivid truthfulness of its descriptions of Italian life, manners, and scenery; and, considered merely as a record of a tour in Italy, it is of great interest and attractiveness. The opinions on Art, and the special criticisms on the masterpieces of architecture, sculpture, and painting, also possess a value of their own. The story might have been told, and the characters fully represented, in one third of the space devoted to them, yet description and narration are so artfully combined that each assists to give interest to the other. Hawthorne is one of those true observers who concentrate in observation every power of their minds. He has accurate sight and piercing insight. When he modifies either the form or the spirit of the objects he describes, he does it either by viewing them through the medium of an imagined mind or by obeying associations which they themselves suggest. We might quote from the descriptive portions of the work a hundred pages, at least, which would demonstrate how closely accurate observation is connected with the highest powers of the intellect and imagination.

The style of the book is perfect of its kind, and, if Hawthorne had written nothing else, would entitle him to rank among the great masters of English composition. Walter Savage Landor is reported to have said of an author whom he knew in his youth, "My friend wrote excellent English, a language now obsolete." Had "The Marble Faun" appeared before he uttered this sarcasm, the wit of the remark would have been pointless. Hawthorne not only writes English, but the sweetest, simplest, and clearest English that ever has been made the vehicle of equal depth, variety, and subtilty of thought and emotion. His mind is reflected in his style, as a face is reflected in a mirror; and the latter does not give back its image with less appearance of effort than the former. His excellence consists not so much in using common words as in making common words express uncommon things. Swift, Addison, Goldsmith, not to mention others, wrote with as much simplicity; but the style of neither embodies an individuality so complex, passions so strange and intense, sentiments so fantastic and preternatural, thoughts so profound and delicate, and imaginations so remote from the recognized limits of the ideal, as find an orderly outlet in the pure English of Hawthorne. He has hardly a word to which Mrs. Trimmer would primly object,

hardly a sentence which would call forth the frosty anathema of Blair, Hurd, Kames, or Whately, and yet he contrives to embody in his simple style qualities which would almost excuse the verbal extravagances of Carlyle.

In regard to the characterization and plot of "The Marble Faun," there is room for widely varying opinions. Hilda, Miriam, and Donatello will be generally received as superior in power and depth to any of Hawthorne's previous creations of character; Donatello, especially, must be considered one of the most original and exquisite conceptions in the whole range of romance; but the story in which they appear will seem to many an unsolved puzzle, and even the tolerant and interpretative "gentle reader" will be troubled with the unsatisfactory conclusion. It is justifiable for a romancer to sting the curiosity of his readers with a mystery, only on the implied obligation to explain it at last; but this story begins in mystery only to end in mist. The suggestive faculty is tormented rather than genially excited, and in the end is left a prey to doubts. The central idea of the story, the necessity of sin to convert such a creature as Donatello into a moral being, is not happily illustrated in the leading event. When Donatello kills the wretch who malignantly dogs the

steps of Miriam, all readers think that Donatello committed no sin at all; and the reason is, that Hawthorne has deprived the persecutor of Miriam of all human attributes, made him an allegorical representation of one of the most fiendish forms of unmixed evil, so that we welcome his destruction with something of the same feeling with which, in following the allegory of Spenser or Bunyan, we rejoice in the hero's victory over the Blatant Beast or Giant Despair. Conceding, however, that Donatello's act was murder, and not "justifiable homicide," we are still not sure that the author's conception of his nature and of the change caused in his nature by that act, are carried out with a felicity corresponding to the original conception.

In the first volume, and in the early part of the second, the author's hold on his design is comparatively firm, but it somewhat relaxes as he proceeds, and in the end it seems almost to escape from his grasp. Few can be satisfied with the concluding chapters, for the reason that nothing is really concluded. We are willing to follow the ingenious processes of Calhoun's deductive logic, because we are sure, that, however severely they task the faculty of attention, they will lead to some positive result; but Hawthorne's logic of events leaves us in the end

bewildered in a labyrinth of guesses. The book is, on the whole, such a great book, that its defects are felt with all the more force.

In this rapid glance at some of the peculiarities of Hawthorne's genius, we have not, of course, been able to do full justice to the special merits of the works passed in review; but we trust that we have said nothing which would convey the impression that we do not place them among the most remarkable romances produced in an age in which romance-writing has called forth some of the highest powers of the human mind. In intellect and imagination, in the faculty of discerning spirits and detecting laws, we doubt if any living novelist is his equal; but his genius, in its creative action, has been heretofore attracted to the dark rather than the bright side of the interior life of humanity, and the geniality which evidently is in him has rarely found adequate expression. In the many works which he may still be expected to write, it is to be hoped that his mind will lose some of its sadness of tone without losing any of its subtilty and depth; but, in any event, it would be unjust to deny that he has already done enough to insure him a commanding position in American literature as long as American literature has an existence.

IX.

EDWARD EVERETT.*

IT is certainly fit, gentlemen, that the sense of bereavement which this city and the whole nation have felt in the death of Mr. Everett should find emphatic expression in the Club of which he was the honored President. Known to every member as the most exquisitely affable of presiding officers; a chairman with the gracious and graceful manners of a host; ever ready to listen as to speak; and masking the eminence, which all were glad to acknowledge, in that bland and benignant courtesy, of which all were made to feel the charm, — his presence gave a peculiar dignity to our meetings, which it will be impossible to replace, and impressed on all of us the conviction, that to his other gifts and accomplishments must be added the distinction of having been the most accomplished gentleman of his time. Indeed, it is probable, that, in this quality

* Read before the Thursday Evening Club, at its meeting on January 26, 1865.

of high-bred and inbred courtesy, which we all have such good cause to admire and to remember, may be found the explanation and justification of some things in his character and career which have been subjected to adverse and acrimonious criticism; and, in the few remarks I propose to make, allow me to throw into relations to this felicity of his nature, the powers and achievements which have made him so widely famous, and, what is better, so widely mourned.

Mr. Everett was born with that fineness of mental and of bodily organization, the sensitiveness of which is hardly yet thoroughly tolerated by the world which still profits by its superiorities. There was refinement in the very substance of his being; by a necessity of his constitution he disposed everything he perceived into some orderly relations to ideas of dignity and grace; he instinctively shunned what was coarse, discordant, uncomely, unbecoming; and that internal world of thoughts, sentiments, and dispositions, which each man forms or re-forms for himself, and in which he really lives, in his case obeyed the law of comeliness, and came out as naturally in his manners as in his writings, in the beautiful urbanity of his behavior, as in the cadenced periods of his eloquence. The fascination of this

must have been felt even in his childhood, for he was an orator whose infant prattle attracted an audience; and he may be said to have passed from the cradle into public life. To a swiftness and accuracy of apprehension which made study the most delightful and self-rewarding of tasks, he added a general brightness, vigor and poise of faculties, which gave premature promise of the reflection and judgment which were to come. By some sure instinct, the friends who seemed combined in a kindly conspiracy to assist and to spoil him, must have felt that they had to do with a nature whose innate modesty was its protection from conceit, and whose ambition to excel was but one form of its ambition for excellence. The fact to be considered is, that, in childhood and in youth as in manhood and age, there was something in him which irresistibly attracted admiration and esteem, and made men desirous of helping him on *in* the path his genius chose, and *to* the goal from which his destiny beckoned.

It will be impossible here to do more than indicate the steps of that comprehensive career, so full of distinction for himself, so full of benefit for the nation, which has been for the past ten days the theme of so many eulogies: — the college student, bearing away the highest honors of his class; the

boy-preacher, whose pulpit eloquence alternately kindled and melted men of maturest years; the Greek Professor, whose knowledge of the finest and most flexible instrument of human thought extorted the admiration of the most accomplished of all the translators of Plato; the fertile Writer and wide-ranging Critic, whose familiarity with many languages only added to the energy and elegance with which he wielded the resources of his own; the Representative of Middlesex, whose mastery of the minutest details of political business was not more evident than his ready grasp of the broader principles of political science; the Governor of Massachusetts, whose wise and able administration gave a new impulse to the cause of education and to some of the most important of the arts of peace; the Ambassador, who co-operated with his friend, the great Secretary, in converting the provocations to what would have been one of the most calamitous of all wars into the occasion for negotiating one of the most beneficent of all treaties; the President of Harvard, bringing back to his *Alma Mater* the culture he had received from her increased an hundred-fold, and presenting to the students the noble example of a scholarship which was always teaching, and therefore always learning; the Secretary of State, whose brief posses-

sion of office was yet sufficient to show with what firmness of purpose he could uphold American honor, and with what prodigality of information he could expound American rights; the Orator of all "occasions," scattering through many years, and from a hundred platforms, the rich stores of his varied knowledge, the ripe results of his large experience, and the animating inspirations of his fervid soul; the Patriot, who ever made his scholarship, statesmanship, and eloquence serviceable and subsidiary to the interest and glory of his country, and who, when would-be parricides lifted their daggers to stab the august mother who had borne them, flung himself, with a grand superiority to party prejudices, and a brave disdain of consequences to himself, into the great current of impassioned purpose which surged up from the nation's heroic heart; the Christian philanthropist, who, through a long life, had been the object of no insult or wrong which could rouse in him the fierce desire for vengeance, and whose last public effort was a magnanimous plea for that "retaliation" which Christianity both allows and enjoins: — all these claims to honor, all this multiform and multiplied activity, have been the subjects of eager and emulous panegyric; and little has been overlooked in the loving and grateful survey.

Such a career implies the most assiduous self-culture; but it was a culture free from the fault of intellectual selfishness, for it was not centred in itself, but pursued with a view to the public service; and the thirst for acquisition was not stronger than the ardor for communication. Such a career also implies a constant state of preparation for public duties; but only by those whose ambition is to get office, rather than to get qualified for office, will this peculiarity be sneeringly imputed to a love of display. Still, the vast publicity which such a career rendered inevitable would have developed in him some of the malignant, or some of the frivolous, vices of public life, had it not been that a fine modesty tempered his constant sense of personal efficiency, — had it not been that a certain shyness at the core of his being made it impossible that his self-reliance should rush rudely out in any of the brazen forms of self-assertion. And this brings me back to that essential gentlemanliness of nature, which penetrated every faculty, and lent its tone to every expression, of our departed President. This gave him a most sensitive regard for the rights and feelings of others, and this made him instinctively expect the same regard for his own. He guarded with an almost jealous vigilance the reserves of his individuality,

and resented all uncouth or unwarranted intrusion into these sanctuaries which his dignity shielded, with a feeling of grieved surprise. In his wide converse with men, even in the contentions of party, his mind ever moved in a certain ideal region of mutual courtesy and respect. It was to be anticipated, that, in the rough game of politics, where blows are commonly given and received with equal carelessness, and where mutual charges of dishonesty are both expected and unheeded, such a nature as Mr. Everett's should sometimes suffer exquisite pain; that his nerves should quiver in impatient disgust of such odious publicity; that he should be tempted at times to feel that the inconsiderate assailers of his character —

> "Made it seem more sweet to be
> The little life of bank and brier,
> The bird that pipes his lone desire,
> And dies unheard within his tree,
>
> "Than he who warbles long and loud,
> And drops at Glory's temple-gates;
> For whom the carrion-vulture waits
> To tear his heart before the crowd!"

In this sensitiveness, refinement, and courtesy of nature, in this chivalrous respect for other minds and tenderness for other hearts, is to be found the

peculiarity of his oratory. He was the last great master of persuasive eloquence. The circumstances of the time have given to our public speaking an aggressive and denouncing character, and invective has contemptuously cast persuasion aside, and almost reduced it to the condition of one of the lost arts. This is undoubtedly a great evil, for invective commonly dispenses with insight, is impotent to interpret what it assails, and fits the tongue of mediocrity as readily as that of genius. It is true that the mightiest exemplars of eloquence have been those who have wielded this most terrific weapon in the armory of the orator with the most overwhelming effect. Demosthenes, Chatham, Burke, Mirabeau, men of vivid minds, hot hearts, and audacious wills, have made themselves the terror of the assemblies they ruled, by their power of uttering those brief and dreadful invectives, which "appall the guilty and make bold the free," — which come like the lightning, irradiating *for* an instant what *in* an instant they blast. Perhaps the noblest spectacle in the annals of eloquence is that in which the mute rage and despair of a hundred millions of Asiatics found, in the assembly responsible for their oppression, fiery utterance from the intrepid lips of Burke. But such men are rightly examples only to their peers; a

certain autocracy of nature is the animating principle of their genius; and, when they are copied simply by the tongue, they are likely to produce shrews rather than sages. Mr. Everett followed the bent of his character and the law of his mind when he aimed to enter into genial relations with his auditors, and to associate the reception of his views with a quickening of their better feelings, and an addition to their self-respect. Mount Vernon, the poor of East Tennessee, the poor of Savannah, attest that his greatest triumphs were those of persuasion. And in recalling the tones of that melodious voice, whose words were thus works, one is tempted to think that Force, in eloquence, is the mailed giant of the feudal age, who, assailing under a storm of missiles the fortress of his adversary, makes the tough gates shiver under the furiously rapid strokes of his battle-axe, and enters as a victor; while Persuasion, "with his garland and singing robes about him," speaks the magical word which makes the gates fly open of their own accord, and enters as a guest.

It is but just, gentlemen, that our lamented President, the source of so many eulogies, should now be their theme; that his joy in recognizing eminency in others should be met by a glad and universal

recognition of it in himself. And, certainly, that spotless private and distinguished public life could have closed at no period when the heart of the whole loyal nation was more eager to admire the genius of the orator, and sound the praises of the patriot, and laud the virtues of the man, than on the day when his mortal frame, beautiful in life, and beautiful in death, was followed by that long procession of bereaved citizens, through those mourning streets, to that consecrated grave!

X.

THOMAS STARR KING.*

I CANNOT doubt that all of you, friends and parishioners of Thomas Starr King, have felt how difficult it is to speak in detail of the qualities of him, the mere mention of whose name so quickly brings up his presence in all its gracious and genial power, and his nature in all its exquisite harmony. He comes to us always as a person, and not as an assemblage of qualities; and however precious may be the memory of particular traits of mind or disposition, they refuse to be described in general terms, but are all felt to be excellent and lovable, because expressive of him. Others may attract us through the splendor of some special faculty, or the eminency of some special virtue, but in his case it is the whole individual we admire and love, and the faculty takes its peculiar character, the virtue acquires its subtile charm, because considered as an outgrowth of the

* Address at the Memorial Service at Hollis Street Church, Boston, on Sunday evening, April 3, 1864.

beautiful, beneficent, and bounteous nature in which it had its root.

And here, I think, we touch the source of his influence and the secret of his power, as friend, pastor, preacher, writer, patriot, and — let me add — statesman. He had the rare felicity, in everything he said and did, of communicating himself, — the most precious thing he could bestow; and he so bound others to him by this occupation of their hearts, that to love him was to love a second self. This communication was as unmistakable in his lightest talk with a chance companion, as in that strong hold on masses of men, and power of lifting them up to the height of his own thought and purpose, which, in the case of California, will give his name a position among the moral founders of states. Everybody he met he unconsciously enriched; everywhere he went he instinctively organized. Meanness, envy, malice, bigotry, avarice, hatred, low views of public and private duty, all bad passions and paltry expediencies, slunk away abashed from every mind which felt the light and heat of that sun-like nature, stealing or streaming into it. Such evil spirits could not live in such a rebuking presence, whether it came in the form of wit, or tenderness, or argument, or admonition, or exhilarating appeal, or soul-animating eloquence. Ev-

erybody was more generous from contact with that radiating beneficence; everybody caught the contagion of that cheerful spirit of humanity; everybody felt grateful to that genial exorcist, who drove the devils of selfishness and pride from the heart, and softly ensconced himself in their vacated seats. The wonder is, not that he raised so much for benevolent purposes, but that he did not make a complete sweep of all the pockets which opened so obediently to his winning appeal. Rights of property, however jealously guarded against others, were felt to be impertinent towards him; his presence outvalued everything in the room he gladdened with his beaming face; people were pleasingly tormented with a desire to give him something; for giving was so emphatically the law of his own being, he was so joyously disinterested himself, that, in his company, avarice itself saw the ridiculous incongruity of its greed, and, with a grim smile, suffered its clutch on its cherished hoards to relax.

And this thorough good nature had nothing of the weakness, nothing of the cant, nothing of the fear of giving offence, nothing of the self-consciousness, noth ing of the bending and begging air of professional benevolence, but was as erect and resolute as it was wholesome and sweet. It seemed the effect of the

native vigor as well as the native kindliness of his cordial and opulent soul. It never cloyed with its amiability. It did not insult the poor with condescension, or court the rich with servility, but took its place on an easy equality and fraternity with all, without the pretence of being the inferior of any. While he was too manly to ape humility, the mere idea of setting himself up as "a superior being" would have drawn from him one of those bursts of uncontrollable merriment, happy as childhood's and as innocent, which will linger in the ears of friends who often heard that glad music, until the grave closes over them as it has over him.

The expression of this nature through the intellect was as free from obstruction as through morals and manners. His mind, like his heart, was open on all sides. Clear, bright, eager, rapid, and joyous; with observation, memory, reason, imagination, in full play; with a glance quick to detect the ludicrous as well as the beautiful; and with an analogical power, both in the region of fancy and understanding, of remarkable vivacity and brilliancy; his intellect early fastened on facts and on principles with the delight of impulse rather than the effort of attention and will. In swiftness and exactness of perception, both of ideas and of their relations, he was a marvel from

his boyhood. Grasping with such ease, and assimilating with such readiness, the nutriment of thought, he *made mind* faster than others receive impressions. His faculties palpably grew day by day, increasing their force and enlarging their scope with every fresh and new perception of nature and books and men. He tasted continually the deep joy of constant mental activity. Who shall measure the happiness of that exhilarating sense of daily increase of knowledge and development of power? — the sweet surprise of swift-springing thoughts from never-failing fountains, — the glow and elation of soul as objects poured in from without, and ideas streamed out from within! His mind, as independent as it was receptive, and as free from self-distrust as from presumption, never lost its balance as it sensitively quivered under the various knowledge that went thronging into it; for there was the judgment to dispose as well as the passion to know, and the sacred hunger for new truth and beauty never degenerated into that ignoble gluttony which paralyzes the action of the mind it overfeeds.

There is something glorious in the contemplation of a youth passed in such constant, such happy, such self-rewarding toil. He had a natural aptitude for large ideas and deep sentiments. His mind caught

at laws immersed in bewildering details, — darted to the salient points and delved to the central principles of controverted questions, — and absorbed systems of philosophy as hilariously as others devour story-books. The dauntless boy grappled with such themes as Plato and Goethe, and wrote about them with a prematureness of scholarship, a delicacy of discernment, a sweet, innocent combination of confidence and diffidence, which were inexpressibly charming. Throughout his career, in sermon and in lecture, this strong tendency to view everything in its principles was always prominent; and as a popularizer of ideas removed from ordinary apprehension, — secreted, indeed, from general view in the jargon of metaphysics, — he was, perhaps, without an equal in the country.

It is hardly possible to say what this mind might not have grown to be, had not the drain on its energies begun almost as early as the unfolding of its faculties, — had not the dissipation of power nearly kept pace with its accumulation. His time, talent, and sympathies were the property of all they delighted and benefited. The public seized on him at an early age, and did not loosen its grasp until within a few days of his death. His parish was not confined to this society, but covered the ever-enlarg-

ing circle of his acquaintances and audiences. The demands, accordingly, on that fertile brain and bounteous heart were constant and endless. We were always after him to write, to preach, to lecture, to converse; we plotted lovingly against his leisure; and as long as there was a bit of life in him, we claimed it with all the indiscriminate eagerness of exacting affection. As soon as a thought sprouted in his head, we insisted on having it; and we were all in a friendly conspiracy to prevent his exercise of that patient, concentrated, uninterrupted thinking, which conducts to the heights of intellectual power.

Perhaps his elastic mind might have stood this drain; but the mind is braced by the emotional forces which underlie it; and it was on these that his friends delighted to feed. His sympathetic nature attracted towards him the craving for sympathy in others; and nothing draws more on the very sources of vitality, mental and moral, than this assumption of the sorrows, disappointments, heart-breaks, and miseries of others, this incessant giving out of the very capital and reserve fund of existence, to meet the demands for sympathy. I have sometimes seen him physically and morally fatigued and exhausted from this over-exertion of brain and heart, and have wondered why, if each found it so hard to bear his own

burdens in silence, we did not consider the cruelty of casting the burdens of all, in one mountainous load, upon him.

When we remember this immense readiness to give, this admission of the claims of misfortune and trouble to take out patent rights on his time and sympathy, it is astonishing how much, intellectually, he achieved. This was owing not more to the fine quality of his intellect than to its mode of action, for deep down in the very centre of his being was the element of beauty, and this unceasingly strove to mould all he thought and did into its own likeness. It was not only expressed in fancy and imagination, in the richness of his imagery and the cadence of his periods, and in that peculiar combination of softness and fire which lent to his eloquence its persuasive power, but it gave luminousness to his arrangement, method to his scholarship, consecutiveness to his argumentation, symmetry to his moral life. It abridged as well as decorated his work. Things that went into his mind huddled and confused, hastened to fall into their right relations, and harmoniously adjust themselves to some definite plan and purpose, as soon as they felt the disposing touch of that artistic intelligence, to which all disorder was unbecoming as well as unsystematic. This quality of beauty, an element

of his character as well as a shaping faculty of his mind, demanded symmetry in all things, — symmetry of form in things imaginative, symmetry of law in things intellectual, symmetry of life in things moral. The besetting sins of the head and the heart appeared to him uncomely as well as wrong, and he avoided them through an instinctive love of the good and the fair. As much of our intellectual and moral effort is spent in removing obstacles and overcoming temptations, and as from this weary work he was in a great measure spared, the time saved was so many years added to his life.

But it must be added, that this pervading sentiment of the beautiful did not make him one of those bigots of the ideal, whom the deformities of practical life keep in a morbid state of constant moral or mental irritation. From the fret of this fine fanaticism, which always weakens the character it seemingly adorns, he was preserved by his exquisite, his delicious sense of the ludicrous. The deformed, when his eye sparkled upon it, hastened to change into the grotesque; it acquired, indeed, a quaint beauty of its own; it irritated, not his nerves, but his risibilities; it slid into his loving heart, — always open to things human, — and was there nursed and cherished on the sunniest mirth and laughter that humorous object

ever fed upon. For the morally deformed his whole being had an instinctive repugnance; but when himself the mark at which meanness or malice aimed, he always seemed to me rather amused than exasperated. The oddity of the meanness, the strange futility of the malice, affected him like a practical joke; quick as lightning to detect the base thing, he still dismissed it laughingly from his mind, with hardly the appearance of having suffered wrong, and certainly without any desire or intention to retaliate. No wound could fester in that humane and healthy soul.

The love of the beautiful, to which I have referred as so strong an element in his nature, was, as it regards natural scenery, most completely embodied in his eloquent book on the White Hills, — which will look the sadder to us now that the loving chronicler of their varying aspects of grandeur and grace, who has associated his own name with every valley and peak, will visit them no more; but when his sermons and lectures are published, it will be seen how closely the beautiful in nature was linked in his mind with the beautiful in thought, in character, and in action. He loved his theological calling, and it was his ambition to pay the debt which every able man is said to owe his profession, namely, to contribute some work of permanent value to its literature.

Had he lived, he would, I think, have written the most original, the most interpretative, and the most attractive of all books on the life, character, and epistles of the Apostle Paul. But it was ordered that his life should be chiefly spent in direct action on men through speech and personal influence; and theology may well wait for the book, when humanity had such pressing need for the man.

I hardly know how to speak of his moral and spiritual qualities; for, noble as they were, they were not detached from his mind, but pervaded it. Both as a thinker and as a reformer he was brave almost to audacity; but his courage was tempered by an admirable discretion and sense of the becoming, and his quick self-recovery from a mistake or error was not one of the least of his gifts. He seemed to have no fear, not even the subtlest form which fear assumes in our day, — the fear of being thought afraid. No supercilious taunt, or imputation of timidity, could sting him into going further in liberal theology and reforming politics than his own intelligence and conscience carried him. Malignity was a spiritual vice of which I have sometimes doubted if he had even the mental perception. His charity and toleration were as wide as his knowledge of men. Controversy was a gymnastic in which he delighted to brace his

faculties, but he could look at disputed questions from the point of view of his opponents, discriminate between dogmas and the holders of them, and assail opinions without unwittingly defaming character. "Speaking the truth in love," was a text which he seemed born to illustrate; and if, as a theologian, he did not perceive the moral evil of the world in all its ghastliness, it was because its most hateful forms stole away when he appeared, and, addressing what was good in men, the good went gladly out to him in return. His piety, pure, deep, tender, serene, and warm, took hold of the positive principles of light and beneficence, not of the negative ones of darkness and depravity, and — himself a child of the light — he preached the religion of spiritual joy.

The rarity of such a character, and the wide influence it was calculated to exert in virtue of its native qualities, were only seen in all their beauty and might when he went from us to California, and we looked at him from afar. In four years he condensed the work of forty. The very genius of organization seemed to wait upon his steps. Men flocked to him as to a natural benefactor. As a clergyman, he built up the strongest church in the State, with an income the largest of any in the land. As a philanthropist, he raised for the most beneficent

of all charities the most munificent of all subscriptions. As a patriotic Christian statesman, he included the real elements of power in the community, took the people out of the hands of disloyal politicians, lifted them up to the level of his own ardent soul, and not only saved the State to the Union, but imprinted his own generous and magnanimous spirit on its forming life. In the full speed of this victorious career, with the blessings of a nation raining upon him, he was arrested by death, — the rich and abounding life suddenly summoned to the Source of Life, and "happy to go." Human willingness could hardly answer the Divine Will with more perfect submission; and it is not for us, who remember with what a shock of inexpressible grief and pain that unexpected departure smote the hearts of kindred and friends, but who also remember how often from this pulpit, and from his lips, we have been taught that the purpose of Providence in sending death is always beneficent, to doubt that the stroke, so heavy to us, so "happy" to him, was prompted by wisdom and love. Bowing before that transcendent mystery, and not seeking to penetrate it, let us find consolation in the faith that this child of the light has been caught up into the Light Ineffable, — that this preacher of the religion of joy has entered into the joy of his Lord.

XI.

AGASSIZ.*

NO thoughtful person can have watched the tendencies of scientific thinking, for the last twenty or thirty years, without being impressed with its bearings on Natural Theology and the Philosophy of the Mind. A large class of scientific men, eminent for their powers of observation and understanding, but deficient in the more subtile and profound elements of mind which mark the philosophic thinker, have undoubtedly evinced in their speculations a strong leaning to Materialism, in what may be considered its worst form, namely, the doctrine that organized beings owe their origin to merely physical agents. The intellectual defect of these *savans* is a seeming incapacity to comprehend, appreciate, and feel the necessity of the fertile idea of *Cause*. For this they substitute the abstraction of *Law*, without a distinct impression of the meaning of the term, for law implies a power that legislates. It is no cause, but

* Essay on Classification, 1857.

only the mode in which a cause operates; "not action, but a rule of action." The distinguishing characteristic of a mind of the second class is its content with that explanation of a problem which is one or two removes from its centre and heart. It has no fine, detecting sense of the real thing to be investigated, explained, or affirmed. Too sceptical to admit the validity of that mental instinct, that gravitation to the truth, which conducts to solid and intelligent belief, they are credulous enough in giving omnipotence to the lifeless notion of law, if by so doing they can escape from the living conception of cause. The introduction of the idea of God is to them not only a fallacy but an affront, and throws them into a state of intellectual irritation which is not favorable to the fair consideration of the facts and arguments which make such an introduction necessary.

But the defect is not merely intellectual. It is also personal, and has one of its roots in the most refined form of vanity and pride. Everybody is familiar with the subjectivity and self-assertion of poets. We are not surprised when Dante makes himself the lord of the next world, and plunges his enemies into hell, with the full faith that there can be no disagreement between the Deity and himself as to their guilt or mode of punishment. We are

not surprised when Byron colors all nature with the hues of his own spirit, forces natural objects into symbols of his own caprices of disgust or desperation, and views mankind as limited to Byron-kind. But we are hardly prepared to suspect that men engaged in a scientific scrutiny of material existences ever project their own nature on what they observe, or are tempted to make their own minds the measure of things. Yet this is, in many cases, the truth. A clear objective perception of facts, and the laws and principles which inhere in facts, is a moral, no less than a mental quality. It implies a purification of the character from egotism and pride of opinion, a rare union of humility of feeling with audacity of thought, and, above all, the triumph of a sincere love of objective truth over the desire to exalt a subjective *self*. The moment a scientific man begins to bluster about his discoveries, and call them "*my* truth," it is all over with him. He has given pledges to the strongest of all selfish principles that he will see Nature hereafter only as Nature squares with his theory, and feeds his self-importance. Especially, if he calls his notion Law, and makes law an ultimate, beyond which the human reason cannot go, he feels as if he were the creator of that which he has, perhaps, only imperfectly observed. In his

sage opinion it is the folly of superstition to admit the necessity of God, but he sees no impropriety in the apotheosis of his darling notion; and, accordingly, he quietly expels God from the universe, and puts himself in His place. He does it as unmistakably, though not as coarsely and obviously, as the religious fanatic, who projects a deity from his malignant passions, and then insists on his being worshipped by all mankind. The temptation to substitute self — either in its emotional, or imaginative, or reasoning expression — for objective truth is a temptation which is not confined to any one class of powerful natures, but operates on all; and men of science have their full share of the infirmity.

We have been led into these remarks by reading the long introductory Essay on Classification, in the first volume of Mr. Agassiz's "Contributions to the Natural History of North America," — a work of the first importance, if we merely consider its positive additions to our knowledge of Natural History; but especially interesting to us for the felicity and power with which it deals with the higher philosophy of the science, and the superiority of the author to the besetting mental sins we have indicated. In the "Essay on Classification," the first of living naturalists proves himself also to be among the first of

living thinkers in the department of natural theology. Its publication we cannot but think to be no mere incident in the progress of science, but an event. It would seem to impose on every naturalist the duty of agreeing with Mr. Agassiz or of refuting him. No man of any scientific reputation can hereafter bring forward the development theory, or the theory that animal life can be produced by the natural operation of physical agents, or the theory that God is an obsolete idea in science, or the theory that things were not created but occurred, without harmonizing his theory with Mr. Agassiz's facts, and grappling with Mr. Agassiz's ideas. The essay will also do much to correct the anarchy of thought which prevails among many naturalists, who, being observers rather than thinkers, have confused notions of the real problems to be decided, are sometimes on one side of an important question, sometimes on another, with an imperfect comprehension of the vital points at issue; and who need nothing so much as the assistance of a master-mind, to draw a definite line between the two opposing systems, and to indicate the consequences of each.

There can be no doubt of the right of Mr. Agassiz to speak with authority on the philosophy of his science; for he has fairly earned the right to speak

by labor, by study, by the most extensive investigations, by patient and continuous thought. The whole immense subject of natural history, in itself and in its literature, is reflected in the clear and comprehensive mirror of his mind. He knows facts, and the relations of facts, so thoroughly, that he can wield them with ease as elements of the profoundest philosophical reasoning. The breadth of his view preserves him from the vice of detaching classes of facts from their relations, emphasizing them into undue importance, and severing the fine cord of connection which gives them their real significance. By the instinct of his intelligence he looks at everything, not as isolated, but as related, and consequently he is not content with facts, but searches for the principles which give coherence to facts. As an observer, he is both rapid and accurate. He possesses not merely the talent of observation, but its genius; and hence his ability to perform the enormous tasks which he imposes on his industry. His mind is eminently large, sound, fertile, conscientious, and sagacious, quick and deep in its insight, wide in the range of its argumentation, capable equally of the minutest microscopic scrutiny and the broadest generalizations, independent of schools and systems, and inspired by that grand and ennobling love of truth

which is serenely superior to fear, interest, vanity, ambition, or the desire of display. In the operation of his mind there is no predominance of any single power, but the intellectual action of what we feel to be a powerful nature. When he observes, his whole mind enters into the act of observation, just as when he reasons, his whole mind enters into the act of reasoning. This unity of the man in each intellectual operation gives to his statements and arguments the character of depositions under oath. His personal honor is pledged for his accuracy, and his works are therefore free from those lies of the brain which spring from narrow thought, confused perceptions, and hasty generalizations. Though in decided opposition to many eminent naturalists, he, in common with all lovers of truth, has none of the fretful disputativeness of polemics; and while he calmly and clearly controverts antagonistic theories, he exhibits nothing of the disputatious spirit.

The "Essay on Classification," the reading of which has occasioned these general observations on the characteristics of Mr. Agassiz as a scientific thinker, is addressed to all minds that reflect, and not merely to the professed naturalist. In the general reader, its perusal will be likely to produce something of that wonder and awe which his first introduction to the

marvels of astronomy infused into his mind. And first, Mr. Agassiz takes the ground, that the divisions of the animal kingdom according to type, class, order, family, genus, and species are not convenient devices of the human understanding to classify its knowledge, but were instituted by God as the categories of His thinking. There is a systematic arrangement in nature which science did not *invent*, but gradually *discovered*. The terms in which this arrangement is expressed are the translation into human language of the thoughts of the Creator. The plan of creation, so far from growing out of the necessary action of natural laws, betrays in every part, to the profound student, the signs of having been the free conception of the Divine Intellect, matured in His mind before it was manifested in external forms. The existence of a plan involves premeditation prior to the act which carried the plan into execution; and if, through all the various stages of the physical history of the globe, this plan of animal creation has never been departed from, we are compelled to see in it the marks of thought and forethought, of intelligent purpose and unity of design. Now the researches of Cuvier, who classified animals according to their structure, and of Von Baer, who classified them according to their development, have

shown that the animal kingdom exhibits four primary divisions, the representatives of which are organized upon four different plans of structure, and grow up according to four different modes of development. As regards living animals, at no period do the types pass into each other. The type of each animal is defined from the beginning, and controls the whole development. The embryo of the vertebrate is a vertebrate from the beginning, and does not exhibit at any time a correspondence with the invertebrates. In regard to extinct species the same principle holds good. Within thirty years it was customary for geologists and palæontologists to assert that the lowest animals first made their appearance on the earth, and that these were followed by higher and higher types, until the series was closed by man. Now it is well known that representatives of the four types of animals existed *simultaneously* in the earliest geological periods. All naturalists now agree that there was no priority in time of the appearance of radiata, mollusks, and articulata; and if some still contend that vertebrata originated later than the others, it is still conceded that they appeared before the end of the first great epoch in the history of the globe. It is curious how this great principle of type controls the animal kingdom. Many facts, at first

considered favorable to the notion that animal life was originated by the physical conditions and surroundings of its existence, have been turned against the theory by bringing in this fertile idea. Thus the blind fish in the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky has been cited as indicating that physical conditions determine the absence or presence of organs. But the discovery of a rudimentary eye in this fish proves that, in its creation, the plan of structure of the type to which it belongs was followed, though the organ was of no use. Indeed, the connection between organs and functions, which in most works on natural theology is emphasized as the great proof of causal and intelligent force, is not universally true. Organs without functions are among the ascertained facts of zoölogy. The whale has teeth which never cut through the gum. The males of mammalia have breasts which are never used. Pinnated animals have fingers which are never moved. Why is this? The reason is, that these organs, though not necessary to the mode of existence of the animals, are retained because they relate to the fundamental characteristics of their class. "The organ remains, not for the performance of a *function*, but with reference to a *plan*"; as in architecture the same external combinations which mark the style to which a build-

ing belongs are often retained for the sake of symmetry and harmony of proportion, when they serve no practical object.

Now here is a great fact, true not only as regards living animals, but in respect to fossil species of former geological epochs, which carry the mind back into an incalculable remoteness of time, — the fact, namely, that all organized beings were made on four different plans of structure. These are types, *ideas.* The question is, Can we discriminate between these types and the classes in which the four plans of structure are carried out in actual organizations? If we can thus discriminate, we of course lift the question out of matter into mind. We pass from organization to the Thought and Will that organized. In all matters under human control we are accustomed to take this step. At whatever point we view a fact or event, we trace it back through all the stages of its progress to the invisible thought which contrived it, and the invisible will that bade it be. We never hesitate, when we discern a plan carried practically out in human affairs, to give the plan a previous ideal existence in the mind of its human originator. If we should reason in practical affairs, as some naturalists reason in regard to the origin of organized beings, we should insist that no

one had the logical right to pass, beyond the steam-engine, which is a plan carried out, to the mind of James Watt, where it previously existed in idea.

Now Mr. Agassiz has demonstrated that all animals, both of living and extinct species, which have come under the notice of naturalists, exhibit the marks of these four plans of structure, and of no more, however infinitely diversified they may be in their details of structure. The number of existing species is at least two hundred and fifty thousand, with innumerable living representatives; and there is every reason to suppose that the number of extinct species is at least as great. Thus, from the beginning, through geological epochs which rival in time the marvels of astronomy in space, and under all the physical conditions and changes of the planet, we perceive four ideas controlling the structure of all organized beings. Leaving out of view the difficulty of supposing that physical elements should possess creative intelligence to originate animal life, we may still ask, without profanity, Where, in Heaven's name, did they get the memory? In each epoch they would have been compelled to create anew, for the previous animals had left no living representative to hint the secret of their structure to the wild elemental philosophers who were called upon to extem-

porize animal life after the old plans. They would have been compelled to recollect the mode in which they did it in the elder time. What is this but a misuse of terms, — a wilful naming of one thing by the appellation of another, — a projection of qualities, characteristic of intelligent forces, upon forces which are unintelligent and necessitated?

Mr. Agassiz therefore insists that these four plans of structure correspond to four ideas in the Creator's mind, which are independent of the animal forms in which they are carried out. It is impossible for us to condense the facts and arguments by which, in thirty-one weighty chapters, he proceeds to show that, from whatever point we survey animal life, we are inevitably led to a Supreme Personal Intelligence as its cause and support, — to an intelligence whose working in the animal creation exhibits "thought, considerate thought, combining power, premeditation, prescience, omniscience." Throughout this portion of his essay we continually feel the power and comprehensiveness of his mind, both in the graceful ease with which an immense weight and affluence of knowledge is borne, and the vigorous felicity with which it is wielded in the service of ideas. There is no branch of his subject in which he does not show himself the master of his materials. The most con-

fused facts fall into order and relation, and readily support principles they were at first supposed to deny, when subjected to the scrutiny of his penetrating intelligence. His chapters on the simultaneous existence of the most diversified types under identical circumstances; on the repetition of identical types under the most diversified circumstances; on the unity of plan in otherwise highly diversified types; on the correspondence in the details of structure in animals otherwise entirely disconnected; on the various degrees and different kinds of relationship among animals; on their gradation of structure; their range of geographical distribution; on the serial connection in structure of those widely scattered on the globe's surface; on the relation between their size and structure, and between their size and the mediums in which they live; on the permanency of specific peculiarities in all organized beings; and on their habits, metamorphoses, duration of life, succession, standing, rank, and development: — these are all fertile in original thought and exact observation, and all swell the grand cumulative argument with which he rigorously connects organized beings with their Divine Source. It seems to us that he does not leave a loose or broken link in the whole chain of his reasoning.

The second portion of his essay is devoted to a systematic description of the leading groups of existing animals, as a foundation for a natural system of classification, and the third portion to an elaborate exposition and examination of the principal systems of zoölogy from Aristotle to Von Baer. His definitions of the divisions of what he calls the natural system of classification are clear and exact. Branches or types are characterized by the plan of their structure; classes, by the manner in which that plan is executed, as far as ways and means are concerned; orders, by the degrees of complication of that structure; families, by their form, as far as determined by structure; genera, by the details of the execution in special parts; and species, by the relations of individuals to one another, and to the world in which they live, as well as by the proportion of their parts, their ornamentation, etc. All other divisions are but limitations of these. The representatives of these divisions are perishable individuals. If we select a living animal, we find that it has in its structure all the marks by which we assign it, not only to a certain species and genus, but to an order, family, class, and type; and this classification is not arbitrary, a human device for simplifying our knowledge, but the detection in the object itself of peculiarities divinely

impressed on its structure. Thus in the animal kingdom, God himself has combined unity and simplicity with the vastest diversity; and the study of Natural History is not merely the contemplation of His works, but of His ideas and method, — a study, therefore, in which the spirit of meekness and awe can be united with a depth, force, daring, and amplitude of thought, compared with which the speculations of the selfish and sceptical school of natural philosophers appear feeble, and petty, and pert. The greatness of a philosopher is to be measured by what he suggests and aims after, as well as by what he discovers, and he never seems so great as when he uses his powers in attempting to follow the indications in nature of a Creative Intelligence infinitely greater than himself.

In conclusion, we may say that Mr. Agassiz's processes and results are curiously contradictory of the dictum of that self-chosen legislator of science, Auguste Comte. We have been assured, over and over again, by the champions of the *Philosophie Positive*, that Comte's law of the evolution of scientific thought is incontrovertible. Every branch of knowledge, according to this law, passes through three stages; first, the theological or supernatural, in which phenomena are referred to supernatural agents as

their causes, the principle being the same whether the divine source of things is sought in fetichism or theism; second, the metaphysical, or transitional stage, in which a passage is made from divine persons to personified abstractions, which are supposed to underlie, animate, and produce phenomena; and as the highest conception of the supernatural stage is God considered as cause, so the highest conception of the metaphysical stage is Nature, considered as force; third, the positive stage, in which all inquiry after causes and essences is discarded, God and Nature are expelled from phenomena, and things are classified according to their invariable relations of succession and similitude. The hope of the positivist is, that the various laws with which he now contents his understanding will, in the progress and perfection of science, be found to be the expression of one general and all-inclusive Law. There are, therefore, three modes of viewing facts and relations: the first, which represents the infancy of a science, regards God as the Creator, the second regards Nature as the soul, and the third regards Law as the *regulator*, of phenomena. The highest conception of the positivist, if individualized, would represent the universe under the care of a colossal, yet impersonal policeman, whose business was to preserve order. At

present, the positivist admits that he has only seen some of the inferior police, but he thinks the glorious hope may be not unreasonably indulged that, ages after he is rotten, humanity will catch a glimpse of the master constable himself. By the limitation of the human faculties it is impossible for him to pass to any other orders of government. If he keeps within the circle of the knowable, he stops at the constable; to superstition and metaphysics belong the absurdity of asserting that the constable is not ultimate, but implies a governor and a sovereign!

Now, in the "Essay on Classification," Mr. Agassiz has certainly indicated his right to be ranked with positive philosophers as far as the observation, discovery, and verification of laws is concerned. He is true throughout to facts and the relations of facts, to those "invariable relations of succession and similitude" which the objects of his science bear to each other. He reaches positive conclusions, which there is every probability that future additions to natural history will confirm. He knows everything which the positivists of zoölogy — positivists after the idea of Comte — have observed and demonstrated. He has taken the science as left by them, and carried it forward; and both as an anatomist and embryologist, as an observer of the structure of animals. and as an

observer of their development, he has put on immovable foundations the great law that all animals are organized upon four different plans of structure, and grow up according to four different modes of development. He has corrected the errors, in matters of fact, of many naturalists of Comte's method of thinking, who, while they are never weary of stigmatizing the influence of theological and metaphysical theories in corrupting science, have themselves unconsciously misread facts by viewing them in the light of misleading theories. And after showing, as Mr. Agassiz has done, that the various divisions of the system of classification he espouses exist in nature, are independent of the human mind, and are confirmed by observation and experiment, it will not do to say that the science of zoölogy itself is not yet in the positive stage. How, then, are we to account for the fact that Mr. Agassiz reverses the "inevitable" evolution of scientific thought? How shall we explain the problem that he passes *from* the positive stage to the supernatural, instead of *to* the positive from the supernatural? It may be hinted — and tolerance and charity are not always accompaniments of scientific infidelity — that he does it in deference to popular prejudice, and not in obedience to the evidence of objective truth. This insinuation deserves to be considered somewhat at length.

And first, we admit the paramount importance, in the investigation of the facts of creation, of that independence of thought which is based on courageous character. Cowardice paralyzes the noblest powers; and we own to an instinctive sympathy with every man who, in stating the conscientious results of thought and research, is honored with a howl of execration from that large body of persons who suppose that religion is only safe when it is under the guardianship of ignorance and unreason. But we do not think that the fear of rousing theological prejudice is the kind of fear that a man of science is now in most danger of regarding. He is more tempted to yield to that refined form of cowardice which makes him apprehensive of offending the prejudices of his order. A theological leaning in his scientific speculations is likely to expose him to the suspicious of his peers in science, and withdraw from him the signs of that subtle freemasonry by which leading minds recognize each other. In France, where eminence in the physical and mathematical sciences is the measure of intellectual ability, there is a strong scientific prejudice against associating natural science with natural theology; and France has done much to give the tone to the scientific world. It would be horrible, if it were not comical, to no-

tice the gravity with which the *savans* of the great nation have withdrawn their patronage from the Deity. Even Cousin, in his metaphysical opposition to the materialistic tendencies of French thought, excogitates a Deity who is rather a fine effect of philosophic rhetoric than an object of worship; and he treats Christianity as a man of charming manners would treat a pretty child, making philosophy most condescendingly hold out its hand to her! In the middle of the last century the very *valets* of the French men of science considered belief in God the mark of a vulgar mind. Infidelity was prattled by fops just as superstition was prattled by devotees. Free and liberal minds, so called, became members of an intellectual aristocracy, of which atheism, blatant or latent, was the condition of admittance. At present God is not so much denied as ignored. French science professes to get along very well without him. Religion, as far as it pretends to intellectual supports, is regarded as a sign of weakness, hypocrisy, or fear; and the fear of being thought a coward operates to scare many natural philosophers into something very like cowardice. To avoid the imputation of superstition, they often hesitate to follow the natural action of their understandings. We therefore consider that Mr. Agassiz, as

far as respects the public opinion of the scientific world, — which is the public opinion to which he naturally pays most heed, — will rather lose caste than gain fame among scientific naturalists by insisting so strenuously as he does on the theological aspects of his science. Especially will he be made the object of ridicule for his belief in the interference of God, as Creator, in each geological epoch, — a doctrine which will be considered by many as equivalent to introducing miracles into science, and as carrying it back to the most besotted supernatural stage of knowledge.

We think, therefore, that Mr. Agassiz overcame a temptation, rather than yielded to one, when he broke through the technical limitations of his science, and passed from laws to ideas, and from ideas to God. But we have stronger proof that no desire to propitiate popular prejudices induced him to run the risk of offending scientific prejudices, in the qualities of character impressed on his work itself. The task of criticism is not merely to apply laws, but discern natures; and certainly Mr. Agassiz, in the "Essay on Classification," has exhibited himself as clearly as he has exhibited his subject. An honest, sturdy, generous, self-renouncing love of truth, and willingness to follow whithersoever it leads, — to

atheism, if the facts force him that way, to theism, if the facts conduct him to God, — this is the characteristic which his broad and open nature has stamped unmistakably on his page. Every sentence speaks scorn of intellectual reserves, and innocence of intellectual guile. And it is this truthful spirit animating his labors which gives to his results no small portion of their value and significance; for falseness in the character is likely in the end to become falseness in the intellect; and a thinker on the great themes which interest all mankind is shorn of his influence if his qualities of disposition are such as to cast doubts on his mental honesty, and to put his readers continually on their guard against observations he is supposed capable of making wilfully inaccurate, and reasonings he is supposed capable of making wilfully fallacious.

In his "Essay on Classification," Mr. Agassiz states his scientific convictions. But he is not merely a scientific thinker: he is a scientific force; and no small portion of the immense influence he exerts is due to the energy, intensity, and geniality which distinguish the nature of the man. In personal intercourse he inspires as well as informs, communicates not only knowledge, but the love of knowledge, and makes for the time everything appear of

small account in comparison with the subject which has possession of his soul. To hear him speak on his favorite themes is to become inflamed with his enthusiasm. He is at once one of the most dominating and one of the most sympathetic of men, having the qualities of leader and companion combined in singular harmony. People follow him, work for him, contribute money for his objects, not only from the love inspired by his good fellowship, but from the compulsion exercised by his force. Divorced from his geniality, his energy would make him disliked as a dictator; divorced from his energy, his geniality would be barren of practical effects. The good-will he inspires in others quickens their active faculties as well as their benevolent feelings. They feel that, magnetized by the man, they must do something for the science impersonated in the man, — that there is no way of enjoying his companionship without catching the contagion of his spirit. He consequently wields, through his social qualities, a wider personal influence over a wider variety of persons than any other scientific man of his time. At his genial instigation, laborers delve and dive, students toil for specimens, merchants open their purses, legislatures pass appropriation bills. To do something for Agassiz is a pleasing addition to the

Whole Duty of Man in the region where he lives. Everybody feels that the indefatigable observer and thinker, who declined a lucrative lecture invitation because, he said, he could not *waste his time in making money*, has no other than public ends in his eager demands for public co-operation in his scientific schemes. A perfect democrat in his manners, meeting every man on the level of his position and character, he is the equal and companion of all, and inundates all with his abounding personal vitality and cheer. At times the intensity of his temperament may rise to something like irascibility in the championship of his settled convictions; but this is felt to be a necessary consequence of that identification of the man with his pursuit which is the spring of his tireless energy and of his all-sacrificing devotion to the advancement of his science. Even his vehemence partakes of the largeness, generosity, and geniality of his nature, — is the "noble rage" of a capacious yet ardent intelligence, momentarily carried away by that hatred of error which is the negative form of the love of truth.

This wide geniality is not, in Agassiz, confined to his own race, but extends to the objects of his science. He considers all organized beings as endowed with minds; and as a dramatic poet passes, by imagi-

nation and sympathy, into individual natures differing from his own, thinking from the point of view of Bottom as easily as from the point of view of Hamlet, so Agassiz, passing the bounds even of his own kind, has a sort of interpretative glance into the mental and moral constitution of animals, as well as a scientific perception of their structure. He seems at times to have established spiritual communication with them, so deeply and sympathetically he comprehends their natures and needs; and it might be said that they appear to have a dim perception of his good intentions towards their order, even when he is compelled to sacrifice individuals among them for the good of the science by which they are ennobled. We never hear of his being injured by any of the creatures he captures and dissects. By a fanciful exaggeration, we might even suppose that the martyrs of his zoölogical researches, the patriots of the Animal Kingdom, the Leonidases and Hofers of natural history, had a consciousness that they were immolated for the benefit of their species; that their death was the price by which the welfare of their race was to be assured; that Agassiz, their interpreter, who introduced them to the higher human order of beings, had the dignity and permanent interests of their kind at heart even when he killed; and

that in his hands they became illustrations and proofs of a vast scheme of creation, visible links in a chain of reasoning which, beginning with the structure of the lowest form of animal life, has no other intelligent end than in the ideas of God.

XII.

WASHINGTON AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE REVOLUTION.*

THE day, gentlemen, we have here met to commemorate, in the spirit of a somewhat soberer joy than rings in the noisy jubilee of the streets, is not so much a day dedicated to liberty in the abstract, as a day especially consecrated to American liberty and American independence. The true character of that liberty is to be sought in the events of our Colonial history, in the manners and laws of our Colonial forefathers, and, above all, in the stern, brief epitome of our whole Colonial life contained in that memorable Declaration, the maxims of whose sturdy wisdom still sound in our ears and linger in our hearts, as we have heard them read in this hall today; a Declaration peculiar among all others of its kind, not merely for the fearless free spirit which beats and burns beneath every decisive sentence, but for its combination of clearness in the statement of

* An Oration delivered before the municipal authorities of Boston, July 4, 1850.

particular grievances with audacity in the announcement of general principles; a Declaration, indeed, abounding in sentiments of liberty so sinewy and bold, and ideas of liberty so exact and practical, that it bears on every immortal feature the signs of representing a people, to whom liberty had been long familiar as a living law, as an organized institution, as a homely, household fact. The peculiarities which distinguish the whole substance and tone of this solemn instrument are peculiarities of the American Revolution itself, giving dignity to its events and import to its principles, as they gave success to its arms.

Liberty, considered as an element of human nature, would naturally, if unchecked, follow an ideal law of development, appearing first as a dim but potent sentiment; then as an intelligent sentiment, or idea; then as an organized idea, or body of institutions, recognizing mutual rights and enforcing mutual duties. But, in its historical development, we find that the unselfish nature of liberty is strangely intermixed with its selfish perversion; that, in struggling with outward oppression, it develops inward hatreds; that the sentiment is apt to fester into a malignant passion, the idea to dwindle into a barren opinion, and this passionate opinion to issue in anarchy, which

is despotism disorganized, but as tyrannical under its thousand wills as under its one. These hostile elements, which make up the complex historical fact of liberty, — one positive, the other negative, — one organizing, the other destructive, — are always at work in human affairs with beneficent or baleful energy; but, as society advances, the baser elements give way by degrees to the nobler, and liberty ever tends to realize itself in law. The most genial operation of its creative spirit is when it appears as a still, mysterious, plastic influence, silently and surely modifying the whole constitution of a despotic society, stealing noiselessly into manners, insinuating itself into the administration of laws, grafting new shoots upon the decaying trunks of old institutions, and insensibly building up in a people's mind a character strong enough to maintain rights which are also customs. If its most beneficent influence be seen in its gradual organization of liberties, of sentiments rooted in facts, its most barren effect for good is when it scatters abstract opinions of freedom, true to nothing existing in a people's practical life, and scorning all alliance with manners or compromise with fact. This is a fertile source of disorder, of revolts which end in massacres, of Ages of Reason which end in Reigns of Terror; and perhaps the failure of most

of the European movements comes from their being either mad uprisings against the pressure of intolerable miseries, or fruitless strivings to establish abstract principles. Such principles, however excellent as propositions, can influence only a small minority of a nation, for a nation rises only in defence of rights which have been violated, not for rights which it has never exercised; and abstract "liberty, equality, and fraternity," pushed by amiable sentimentalists like Lamartine, and Satanic sentimentalists like Ledru Rollin, have found their fit result in the armed bureaucracy, now encamped in Paris, under the ironical nickname of "French Republic."

Now, it was the peculiar felicity of our position, that free institutions were planted here at the original settlement of the country, — institutions which De Tocqueville considers founded on principles far in advance of the wisest political science of Europe at that day; and accordingly our Revolution began in the defence of rights which were customs, of ideas which were facts, of liberties which were laws; and these rights, ideas, and liberties, embodying as they did the common life and experience of the people, were truly considered a palpable property, an inalienable inheritance of freedom, which the Stamp Act, and the other measures of Colonial taxation, threat-

ened with confiscation. Parliament, therefore, appeared in America as a spoiler, making war upon the people it assumed to govern, and it thus stimulated and combined the opposition of all classes; for a wrong cannot but be universally perceived when it is universally felt. By thus starting up in defence of the freedom they really possessed, the Colonies vastly increased it. In struggling against innovation, they "innovated" themselves into independence; in battling against novelties, they wrought out into actual form the startling novelty of constitutional American liberty. It was because they had exercised rights that they were such proficients in principles; it was because they had known liberty as an institution that they understood it as a science.

Thus it was not so much the perception of abstract opinions, as the inspiration of positive institutions, which gave our forefathers the heart to brave, and the ability successfully to defy, the colossal power of England; but it must be admitted that in its obnoxious colonial policy England had parted with her wisdom, and in parting with her wisdom had weakened her power; falling, as Burke says, under the operation of that immutable law "which decrees vexation to violence, and poverty to rapine." The England arrayed against us was not the Eng-

land which, a few years before, its energies wielded by the lofty and impassioned genius of the elder Pitt, had smitten the power and humbled the pride of two great European monarchies, and spread its fleets and armies, animated by one vehement soul, over three quarters of the globe. The administrations of the English government, from 1760 to the close of our Revolutionary war, were more or less directed by the intriguing incapacity of the king. George the Third is said to have possessed many private virtues, — and very private for a long time he kept them from his subjects, — but, as a monarch, he was without magnanimity in his sentiments or enlargement in his ideas; prejudiced, uncultivated, bigoted, and perverse; and his boasted morality and piety, when exercised in the sphere of government, partook of the narrowness of his mind and the obstinacy of his will; his conscience being used to transmute his hatreds into duties, and his religious sentiment to sanctify his vindictive passions; and as it was his ambition to rule an empire by the petty politics of a court, he preferred rather to have his folly flattered by parasites than his ignorance enlightened by statesmen. Such a disposition in the king of a free country was incompatible with efficiency in the conduct of affairs, as it split parties

into factions, and made established principles yield to personal expedients. Bute, the king's first minister, after a short administration unexampled for corruption and feebleness, gave way before a storm of popular contempt and hatred. To him succeeded George Grenville, the originator of the Stamp Act, and the blundering promoter of American Independence. Grenville was a hard, sullen, dogmatic, penurious man of affairs, with a complete mastery of the details of parliamentary business, and threading with ease all the labyrinths of English law, but limited in his conceptions, fixed in his opinions, without any of that sagacity which reads results in their principles, and chiefly distinguished for a kind of sour honesty, not infrequently found in men of harsh tempers and technical intellects. It was soon discovered, that, though imperious enough to be a tyrant, he was not servile enough to be a tool; that the same domineering temper which enabled him to push arbitrary measures in Parliament, made him put insolent questions in the closet; and the king, in despair of a servant who could not tax America and persecute Wilkes, without at the same time insulting his master, dismissed him for the Marquis of Rockingham, the leader of the great Whig connection, and a sturdy friend of the Colonists both before the Revolution and

during its progress. Under him the Stamp Act was repealed; but his administration soon proved too liberal to satisfy the politicians who governed the understanding of the king; and the experiment was tried of a composite ministry, put together by Chatham, consisting of members selected from different factions, but without any principle of cohesion to unite them; and the anarchy inherent in the arrangement became portentously apparent, when Chatham, driven by the gout into a state of nervous imbecility, left it to work out its mission of misrule, and its eccentric control was seized by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the gay, false, dissipated, veering, presumptuous, and unscrupulous Charles Townshend. This man was so brilliant and fascinating as an orator, that Walpole said of one of his speeches, that it was like hearing Garrick act extempore scenes from Congreve; but he was without any guiding moral or political principles; and, boundlessly admired by the House of Commons and boundlessly craving its admiration, he seemed to act ever from the impulses of vanity, and speak ever from the inspiration of champagne. Grenville, smarting under his recent defeat, but still doggedly bent on having a revenue raised in America, missed no opportunity of goading this versatile political *roué* with his exasperating sarcasms. "You

are cowards," said he on one occasion, turning to the Treasury bench; "you are afraid of the Americans; you dare not tax America." Townshend, stung by this taunt, started passionately up from his seat, exclaiming, "Fear! cowards! dare not tax America! I do dare tax America!" and this boyish bravado ushered in the celebrated bill, which was to cost England thirteen colonies, add a hundred millions of pounds to her debt, and affix a stain on her public character. Townshend, by the grace of a putrid fever, was saved from witnessing the consequences of his vainglorious presumption; and the direction of his policy eventually fell into the hands of Lord North, a good-natured, second-rate, jobbing statesman, equally destitute of lofty virtues and splendid vices, under whose administration the American war was commenced and prosecuted. Of all the ministers of George the Third, North was the most esteemed by his sovereign; for he had the tact to follow plans which originated in the king's unreasoning brain and wilful disposition, and yet to veil their weak injustice in a drapery of arguments furnished from his own more enlarged mind and easier temper. Chatham and Camden thundered against him in the Lords; Burke and Fox raved and shouted statesmanship to him in the Commons, and screamed out

the maxims of wisdom in ecstasies of invective; but he, good-naturedly tolerant to political adversaries, blandly indifferent to popular execration, and sleeping quietly through whole hours of philippics hot with threats of impeachment, pursued his course of court-ordained folly with the serene composure of a Ulysses or a Somers. The war, as conducted by his ministry, was badly managed; but he had one wise thought which happily failed to become a fact. The command in America, on the breaking out of serious disturbances, was offered to Lord Clive; but, fortunately for us, Clive, at about that time, concluded to commit suicide, and our rustic soldiery were thus saved from meeting in the field a general, who, in vigor of will and fertility of resource, was unequalled by any European commander who had appeared since the death of Marlborough. It may here be added, that Lord North's plans of conciliation were the amiabilities of tyranny and benignities of extortion. They bring to mind the little French fable, wherein a farmer convokes the tenants of his barn-yard, and with sweet solemnity says, "Dear animals, I have assembled you here to advise me what sauce I shall cook you with." "But," exclaims an insurrectionary chicken, "we don't want to be eaten at all!" — to which the urbane chairman replies, "My child, you wander from the point!"

Such was the government whose policy and whose arms were directed against our rights and liberties during the Revolutionary war. As soon as the struggle began, it was obvious that England could hold dominion over no portion of the country, except what her armies occupied or wasted for the time; and that the issue of the contest turned on the question as to which would first yield, — the obstinacy of the king or the fortitude of the Americans. It was plain that George the Third would never yield except under compulsion from the other forces of the English constitution; that, as long as a corrupt House of Commons would vote supplies, he would prosecute the war, no matter what might be the expense of blood and treasure to England, no matter what might be the infliction of misery upon America. Conquest was hopeless; and Lord North, before the war was half concluded, was in favor of abandoning it; but all considerations of policy and humanity were lost upon the small mind and conscientiously malignant temper of the king. Indeed, the peculiarity of our struggle consisted in its being with an unwise ruler, who could not understand that war, waged after the objects for which it was declared have utterly failed, becomes mere rapine and murder; and our energy and endurance were put to the

terrible test, of bearing up against the king's armies, until the English nation, humbling its irritated pride, should be roused in our behalf, and break down the king's stubborn purpose. We all know, and may we never forget, that this resistance to tyrannical innovation was no fiery outbreak of popular passion, spending itself in two or three battles, and then subsiding into gloomy apathy; but a fixed and reasonable resolve, proof against corrupt and sophistical plans of conciliation, against defeats and massacres, against universal bankruptcy and commercial ruin, — a resolve, which the sight of burning villages, and cities turned into British camps, only maddened into fiercer persistence, and which the slow consuming fever of an eight years' war, with its soul-sickening calamities and vicissitudes, could not weaken into submission. The history, so sad and so glorious, which chronicles the stern struggle in which our rights and liberties passed through the awful baptism of fire and blood, is eloquent with the deeds of many patriots, warriors, and statesmen; but these all fall into relations to one prominent and commanding figure, towering up above the whole group in unapproachable majesty, whose exalted character, warm and bright with every public and private virtue, and vital with the essential spirit of wisdom, has burst

all sectional and national bounds, and made the name of Washington the property of all mankind.

This illustrious man, at once the world's admiration and enigma, we are taught by a fine instinct to venerate, and by a wrong opinion to misjudge. The might of his character has taken strong hold upon the feelings of great masses of men; but, in translating this universal sentiment into an intelligent form, the intellectual element of his wonderful nature is as much depressed as the moral element is exalted, and consequently we are apt to misunderstand both. Mediocrity has a bad trick of idealizing itself in eulogizing him, and drags him down to its own level while assuming to lift him to the skies. How many times have we been told that he was not a man of genius, but a person of "excellent common sense," of "admirable judgment," of "rare virtues"! and, by a constant repetition of this odious cant, we have nearly succeeded in divorcing comprehension from his sense, insight from his judgment, force from his virtues, and life from the man. Accordingly, in the panegyric of cold spirits, Washington disappears in a cloud of commonplaces; in the rodomontade of boiling patriots, he expires in the agonies of rant. Now, the sooner this bundle of mediocre talents and moral qualities, which its contrivers have the au-

dacity to call George Washington, is hissed out of existence, the better it will be for the cause of talent and the cause of morals: contempt of that is the condition of insight. He had no genius, it seems. O no! genius, we must suppose, is the peculiar and shining attribute of some orator, whose tongue can spout patriotic speeches, or some versifier, whose muse can "Hail Columbia," but not of the man who supported states on his arm, and carried America in his brain. The madcap Charles Townshend, the motion of whose pyrotechnic mind was like the whiz of a hundred rockets, is a man of genius; but George Washington, raised up above the level of even eminent statesmen, and with a nature moving with the still and orderly celerity of a planet round the sun, — he dwindles, in comparison, into a kind of angelic dunce! What is genius? Is it worth anything? Is splendid folly the measure of its inspiration? Is wisdom that which it recedes from, or tends towards? And by what definition do you award the name to the creator of an epic, and deny it to the creator of a country? On what principle is it to be lavished on him who sculptures in perishing marble the image of possible excellence, and withheld from him who built up in himself a transcendent character, indestructible as the obligations of Duty, and beautiful as her rewards?

Indeed, if by the genius of action you mean will enlightened by intelligence, and intelligence energized by will, — if force and insight be its characteristics, and influence its test, — and, especially, if great effects suppose a cause proportionably great, that is, a vital causative mind, — then is Washington most assuredly a man of genius, and one whom no other American has equalled in the power of working morally and mentally on other minds. His genius, it is true, was of a peculiar kind, the genius of character, of thought and the objects of thought solidified and concentrated into active faculty. He belongs to that rare class of men, — rare as Homers and Miltons, rare as Platos and Newtons, — who have impressed their characters upon nations without pampering national vices. Such men have natures broad enough to include all the facts of a people's practical life, and deep enough to discern the spiritual laws which underlie, animate, and govern those facts. Washington, in short, had that greatness of character which is the highest expression and last result of greatness of mind; for there is no method of building up character except through mind. Indeed, character like his is not *built* up, stone upon stone, precept upon precept, but *grows* up, through an actual contact of thought with things, — the assimilative

mind transmuting the impalpable but potent spirit of public sentiment, and the life of visible facts, and the power of spiritual laws, into individual life and power, so that their mighty energies put on personality, as it were, and act through one centralizing human will. This process may not, if you please, make the great philosopher or the great poet; but it does make the great *man*, — the man in whom thought and judgment seem identical with volition, — the man whose vital expression is not in words, but deeds, — the man whose sublime ideas issue necessarily in sublime acts, not in sublime art. It was because Washington's character was thus composed of the inmost substance and power of facts and principles, that men instinctively felt the perfect reality of his comprehensive manhood. This reality enforced universal respect, married strength to repose, and threw into his face that commanding majesty, which made men of the speculative audacity of Jefferson, and the lucid genius of Hamilton, recognize, with unwonted meekness, his awful superiority.

But, you may say, how does this account for Washington's virtues? Was his disinterestedness will? Was his patriotism intelligence? Was his morality genius? These questions I should answer with an emphatic yes; for there are few falser fallacies than that which

represents moral conduct as flowing from moral opinions detached from moral character. Why, there is hardly a tyrant, sycophant, demagogue, or liberticide mentioned in history, who had not enough moral opinions to suffice for a new Eden; and Shakespeare, the sure-seeing poet of human nature, delights to put the most edifying maxims of ethics into the mouths of his greatest villains, of Angelo, of Richard the Third, of the uncle-father of Hamlet. Without doubt Cæsar and Napoleon could have discoursed more fluently than Washington on patriotism, as there are a thousand French republicans, of the last hour's coinage, who could prattle more eloquently than he on freedom. But Washington's morality was built up in warring with outward temptations and inward passions, and every grace of his conscience was a trophy of toil and struggle. He had no moral opinions which hard experience and sturdy discipline had not vitalized into moral sentiments, and organized into moral powers; and these powers, fixed and seated in the inmost heart of his character, were mighty and far-sighted forces, which made his intelligence moral and his morality intelligent, and which no sorcery of the selfish passions could overcome or deceive. In the sublime metaphysics of the New Testament, his eye was single, and this made his whole body full of

light. It is just here that so many other eminent men of action, who have been tried by strong temptations, have miserably failed. Blinded by pride, or whirled on by wrath, they have ceased to discern and regard the inexorable moral laws, obedience to which is the condition of all permanent success; and, in the labyrinths of fraud and unrealities in which crime entangles ambition, the thousand-eyed genius of wilful error is smitten with folly and madness. No human intellect, however vast its compass and delicate its tact, can safely thread those terrible mazes. "Every heaven-stormer," says a quaint German, "finds his hell, as sure as every mountain its valley." Let us not doubt the genius of Washington because it was identical with wisdom, and because its energies worked with, and not against, the spiritual order its "single eye" was gifted to divine. We commonly say that he acted in accordance with moral laws; but we must recollect that moral laws are intellectual facts, and are known through intellectual processes. We commonly say that he was so conscientious as ever to follow the path of right, and obey the voice of duty. But what is right but an abstract term for rights? What is duty but an abstract term for duties? Rights and duties move not in parallel but converging lines; and how, in the terror, discord,

and madness of a civil war, with rights and duties in confused conflict, can a man seize on the exact point where clashing rights harmonize, and where opposing duties are reconciled, and act vigorously on the conception, without having a conscience so informed with intelligence that his nature gravitates to the truth as by the very instinct and essence of reason?

The virtues of Washington, therefore, appear moral or mental according as we view them with the eye of conscience or reason. In him, loftiness did not exclude breadth, but resulted from it; justice did not exclude wisdom, but grew out of it; and, as the wisest as well as justest man in America, he was pre-eminently distinguished among his contemporaries for moderation, — a word under which weak politicians conceal their want of courage, and knavish politicians their want of principle, but which in him was vital and comprehensive energy, tempering audacity with prudence, self-reliance with modesty, austere principles with merciful charities, inflexible purpose with serene courtesy, and issuing in that persistent and unconquerable fortitude, in which he excelled all mankind. In scrutinizing the events of his life to discover the processes by which his character grew gradually up to its amazing height, we are arrested

at the beginning by the character of his mother, a woman temperate like him in the use of words, from her clear perception and vigorous grasp of things. There is a familiar anecdote recorded of her, which enables us to understand the simple sincerity and genuine heroism she early instilled into his strong and aspiring mind. At a time when his glory rang through Europe; when excitable enthusiasts were crossing the Atlantic for the single purpose of seeing him; when bad poets all over the world were sacking the dictionaries for hyperboles of panegyric; when the pedants of republicanism were calling him the American Cincinnatus and the American Fabius — as if our Washington were honored in playing the adjective to any Roman, however illustrious! — she, in her quiet dignity, simply said to the voluble friends who were striving to flatter her mother's pride into an expression of exulting praise, "that he had been a good son, and she believed he had done his duty as a man." Under the care of a mother, who flooded common words with such a wealth of meaning, the boy was not likely to mistake mediocrity for excellence, but would naturally domesticate in his heart lofty principles of conduct, and act from them as a matter of course, without expecting or obtaining praise. The consequence was, that in early

life, and in his first occupation as surveyor, and through the stirring events of the French war, he built up character day by day in a systematic endurance of hardship; in a constant sacrifice of inclinations to duty; in taming hot passions into the service of reason; in assiduously learning from other minds; in wringing knowledge, which could not be taught him, from the reluctant grasp of a flinty experience; in completely mastering every subject on which he fastened his intellect, so that whatever he knew he knew perfectly and forever, transmuting it into mind, and sending it forth in acts. Intellectual and moral principles, which other men lazily contemplate and talk about, he had learned through a process which gave them the toughness of muscle and bone. A man thus sound at the core and on the surface of his nature; so full at once of integrity and sagacity; speaking ever from the level of his character, and always ready to substantiate opinions with deeds; — a man without any morbid egotism, or pretension, or extravagance; simple, modest, dignified, incorruptible; never giving advice which events did not indorse as wise, never lacking fortitude to bear calamities which resulted from his advice being overruled; — such a man could not but exact that recognition of commanding genius which inspires universal

confidence. Accordingly, when the contest between the colonies and the mother country was assuming its inevitable form of civil war, he was found to be our natural leader in virtue of being the ablest man among a crowd of able men. When he appeared among the eloquent orators, the ingenious thinkers, the vehement patriots, of the Revolution, his modesty and temperate professions could not conceal his superiority: he at once, by the very nature of great character, was felt to be their leader; towered up, indeed, over all their heads as naturally as the fountain, sparkling yonder in this July sun, which, in its long, dark, downward journey, forgets not the altitude of its parent lake, and no sooner finds an outlet in our lower lands than it mounts, by an impatient instinct, surely up to the level of its far-off inland source.

After the first flush and fever of the Revolutionary excitement were over, and the haggard fact of civil war was visible in all its horrors, it soon appeared how vitally important was such a character to the success of such a cause. We have already seen that the issue of the contest depended, not on the decision of this or that battle, not on the occupation of this or that city, but on the power of the colonists to wear out the patience, exhaust the re-

sources, and tame the pride of Great Britain. The king, when Lord North threatened, in 1778, to resign unless the war were discontinued, expressed his determination to lose his crown rather than acknowledge the independence of the rebels; he was as much opposed to that acknowledgment in 1783 as 1778; and it was only by a pressure from without, and when the expenditures for the war had reached more than a hundred millions of pounds, that a reluctant consent was forced from that small, spiteful mind. Now, undoubtedly a vast majority of the American people were unalterably resolved on independence; but they were spread through thirteen colonies, were not without mutual jealousies, and were represented in a Congress whose delegated powers were insufficient to prosecute war with vigor. The problem was, how to combine the strength, allay the suspicions, and sustain the patriotism of the people, during a contest peculiarly calculated to distract and weaken their energies. Washington solved this problem by the true geometry of indomitable personal character. He was the soul of the Revolution, felt at its centre, and felt through all its parts, as a uniting, organizing, animating power. Comprehensive as America itself, through him, and through him alone, could the strength of America act. He was

security in defeat, cheer in despondency, light in darkness, hope in despair, — the one man in whom all could have confidence, — the one man whose sun-like integrity and capacity shot rays of light and heat through everything they shone upon. He would not stoop to thwart the machinations of envy; he would not stoop to contradict the fictions and forgeries of calumny; and he did not need to do it. Before the effortless might of his character, they stole away, and withered, and died; and through no instrumentality of his did their abject authors become immortal as the maligners of Washington.

To do justice to Washington's military career, we must consider that he had to fuse the hardest individual materials into a mass of national force, which was to do battle, not only with disciplined armies, but with frost, famine, and disease. Missing the rapid succession of brilliant engagements between forces almost equal, and the dramatic storm and swift consummation of events, which European campaigns have made familiar, there are those who see in him only a slow, sure, and patient commander, without readiness of combination or energy of movement. But the truth is, the quick eye of his prudent audacity seized occasions to deliver blows with the prompt felicity of Marlborough or Wellington.

He evinced no lack of the highest energy and skill when he turned back the tide of defeat at Monmouth, or in the combinations which preceded the siege of Yorktown, or in the rapid and masterly movements by which, at a period when he was considered utterly ruined, he stooped suddenly down upon Trenton, broke up all the enemy's posts on the Delaware, and snatched Philadelphia from a superior and victorious foe. Again, some eulogists have caricatured him as a passionless, imperturbable, "proper" man; but, at the battle of Monmouth, General Lee was privileged to discover, that from those firm, calm lips could leap words hotter and more smiting than the hot June sun that smote down upon their heads. Indeed, Washington's incessant and various activity answered to the strange complexity of his position, as the heart and brain of a Revolution, which demanded not merely generalship, but the highest qualities of the statesman, the diplomatist, and the patriot. As we view him in his long seven years' struggle with the perilous difficulties of his situation, his activity constantly entangled in a mesh of conflicting considerations, — with his eye fixed on Congress, on the States, and on the people, as well as on the enemy, — compelled to compose sectional quarrels, to inspire faltering patriotism, and to tri-

umph over all the forces of stupidity and selfishness, — compelled to watch, and wait, and warn, and forbear, and endure, as well as to act, — compelled, amid vexations and calamities which might have stung the dullest sensibilities into madness, to transmute the fire of the fiercest passion into an element of fortitude; — and, especially, as we view him coming out of that terrible and obscure scene of trial and temptation, without any bitterness in his virtue, or hatred in his patriotism, but full of the loftiest wisdom and serenest power; — as we view all this in the order of its history, that placid face grows gradually sublime, and in its immortal repose looks rebuke to our presumptuous eulogium of the genius which breathes through it!

We all know that towards the end of the wearying struggle, and when his matchless moderation and invincible fortitude were about to be crowned with the hallowing glory which Liberty piously reserves for her triumphant saints and martyrs, a committee of his officers proposed to make him king; and we sometimes do him the cruel injustice to say that his virtue overcame the *temptation*. He was not knave enough, or fool enough, to be tempted by such criminal baubles. What was his view of the proposal? He, who had never sought popularity, but whom

popularity had sought, — he, who had entered public life, not for the pleasure of exercising power, but for the satisfaction of performing duty, — he, to be insulted and outraged by such an estimate of his services, and such a conception of his character! — why, it could provoke in him nothing but an instantaneous burst of indignation and abhorrence! — and, in his reply, you will find that these emotions strain the language of reproof beyond the stern courtesy of military decorum.

The war ended, and our independence acknowledged, the time came when American liberty, threatened by anarchy, was to be reorganized in the Constitution of the United States. As President of the Convention which framed the Constitution, Washington powerfully contributed to its acceptance by the States. The people were uncertain as to the equity of its compromise of opposing interests, and adjustment of clashing claims. By this eloquent and learned man they were advised to adopt it; by that eloquent and learned man they were advised to reject it; but there, at the end of the instrument itself, and first among many eminent and honored names, was the bold and honest signature of George Washington, a signature which always carried with it the integrity and the influence of his character; and that

was an argument stronger even than any furnished by Hamilton, Madison, and Jay. The Constitution was accepted; and Washington, whose fame, to use Allston's familiar metaphor, was ever the shadow cast by his excellence, was of course unanimously elected President. This is no place to set forth the glories of his civil career. It is sufficient to say, that, placed amid circumstances where ignorance, vanity, or rashness would have worked ruinous mischief and disunion, he consolidated the government. One little record in his diary, just before he entered upon his office, is a key to the spirit of his administration. His journey from Mount Vernon to the seat of government was a triumphal procession. At New York the air was alive with that tumult of popular applause, which has poisoned the integrity by intoxicating the pride of so many eminent generals and statesmen. What was the feeling of Washington? Did he have a misanthrope's cynical contempt for the people's honest tribute of gratitude? Did he have a demagogue's fierce elation in being the object of the people's boundless admiration? No. His sensations, he tells us, were as painful as they were pleasing. His lofty and tranquil mind thought of the possible reverse of the scene after all his exertions to do good. The streaming flags, the loud acclama-

tions, the thunder of the cannon, and the shrill music piercing through all other sounds, — these sent his mind sadly forward to the solitude of his closet, where, with the tender and beautiful austerity of his character, he was perhaps to sacrifice the people's favor for the people's safety, and to employ every granted power of a Constitution he so perfectly understood, in preserving peace, in restraining faction, and in giving energy to all those constitutional restraints on popular passions, by which the wisdom of to-morrow rules the recklessness of to-day.

In reviewing a life thus passed in enduring hardship and confronting peril, fretted by constant cares and worn by incessant drudgery, we are at first saddened by the thought that such heroic virtue should have been purchased by the sacrifice of happiness. But we wrong Washington in bringing his enjoyments to the test of our low standards. He has everything for us to venerate, — nothing for our commiseration. He tasted of that joy which springs from a sense of great responsibilities willingly incurred, and great duties magnanimously performed. To him was given the deep bliss of seeing the austere countenance of inexorable Duty melt into approving smiles, and to him was realized the poet's rapturous vision of her celestial compensations: —

"Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace,
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face."

It has been truly said that "men of intemperate minds cannot be free; their passions forge their fetters"; but no clank of any chain, whether of avarice or ambition, gave the least harshness to the movement of Washington's ample mind. In him America has produced at least one man, whose free soul was fit to be Liberty's chosen home. As was his individual freedom, so should be our national freedom. We have seen all along, that American liberty, in its sentiment and idea, is no opinionated, will-strong, untamable passion, bursting all bounds of moral restraint, and hungering after anarchy and license, but a creative and beneficent energy, organizing itself in laws, professions, trades, arts, institutions. From its extreme practical character, however, it is liable to contract a taint which has long vitiated English freedom. To the Anglo-Saxon mind, Liberty is not apt to be the enthusiast's mountain nymph, with cheeks wet with morning dew and clear eyes that mirror the heavens, but rather is she an old dowager lady, fatly invested in commerce and manufactures, and peevishly fearful that enthusiasm will reduce her es-

tablishment, and panics cut off her dividends. Now the moment property becomes timid, agrarianism becomes bold; and the industry which liberty has created, liberty must animate, or it will be plundered by the impudent and rapacious idleness its slavish fears incite. Our political institutions, again, are but the body of which liberty is the soul; their preservation depends on their being continually inspired by the light and heat of the sentiment and idea whence they sprung; and when we timorously suspend, according to the latest political fashion, the truest and dearest maxims of our freedom at the call of expediency or the threat of passion, — when we convert politics into a mere game of interests, unhallowed by a single great and unselfish principle, — we may be sure that our worst passions are busy "forging our fetters"; that we are proposing all those intricate problems which red republicanism so swiftly solves, and giving Manifest Destiny pertinent hints to shout new anthems of atheism over victorious rapine. The liberty which our fathers planted, and for which they sturdily contended, and under which they grandly conquered, is a rational and temperate, but brave and unyielding freedom, the august mother of institutions, the hardy nurse of enterprise, the sworn ally of justice and order; a Liberty that lifts her awful

and rebuking face equally upon the cowards who would sell, and the braggarts who would pervert, her precious gifts of rights and obligations; and this liberty we are solemnly bound at all hazards to protect, at any sacrifice to preserve, and by all just means to extend, against the unbridled excesses of that ugly and brazen hag, originally scorned and detested by those who unwisely gave her infancy a home, but who now, in her enormous growth and favored deformity, reels with bloodshot eyes, and dishevelled tresses, and words of unshamed slavishness, into halls where Liberty should sit throned!

THE END.

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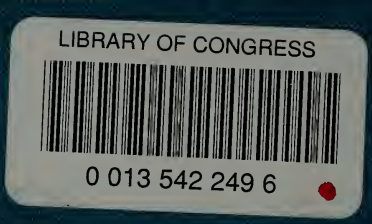
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